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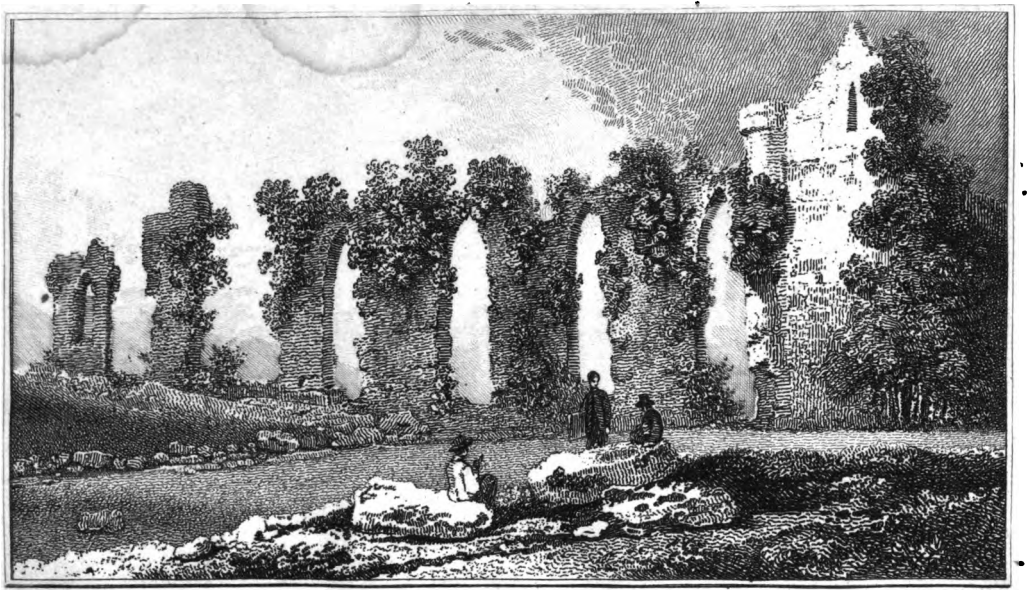

Drawn by E. L. Spence. Etched by J. T. Smith.

Neath Abbey.

Published by Longman Hurst, Rees & Orme, Paternoster Row, March 2nd 1809

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SUMMER EXCURSIONS

THROUGH PARTS OF

OXFORDSHIRE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, WARWICKSHIRE, STAFFORDSHIRE, HEREFORDSHIRE, DERBYSHIRE, AND SOUTH WALES.

BY E. I. SPENCE,

AUTHOR OF "THE NOBILITY OF THE HEART," AND "THE WEDDING-DAY."

——————Oh, what a sweep
Of landscape lies beneath me! Hills on hills;
——————and below
Lies the fair glen, whose broken waters flow,
Making such pleasant murmurs as delight
The lingering traveller's ear—thus on my road
How sweet it is to rest me, and survey
The goodly prospect of my journey'd way,
And think of all the pleasures it bestowed.

Southey.

VOL. I

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1809.

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T. DAVISON, Whitefriars, London.

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THE FOLLOWING

LETTERS

ARE,

WITH THE HIGHEST RESPECT,

ADDRESSED TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

DOWAGER COUNTESS OF WINTERTON,

BY HER LADYSHIP'S

GRATEFULLY OBLIGED

AND OBEDIENT

HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

When a writer leaves the province of the imagination to detail matters of fact, and to describe the aspect of real countries, some apology may be necessary for the change. The numerous Tours which have appeared of late years, and the learning and talents of their respective authors, make me reluctant to denominate my Letters by such an appellation, yet, it is hoped, that a short account of "*Summer*

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Excursions," whether undertaken for health or pleasure, may still be rendered subservient to some general advantage. Those whom either business or infirmity impels to leave the metropolis, and who have neither time nor inclination to peruse many ponderous and expensive volumes, may feel pleased with a brief sketch of the manners, customs, habits of life, and expences of living in various districts: such details, conveyed in a familiar style, may determine the valetudinarian to what county to retire for the recovery of health, or suggest to the tradesman or merchant where he is most likely to extend his connections and business. The former may hence learn where he

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can gratify his peculiar taste and invigorate his constitution; the latter, where he may extend or open new sources of commercial speculation. One country may suit the recluse, another the man of fashion, and a third the man of business; each having his customs and peculiarities, perhaps too deeply rooted not to experience disgust and disappointment on finding himself in a place but little congenial to his taste and feelings. Should these Letters enable the reader to decide what town or county he should prefer for a residence, or which he should first visit, they will not have been written in vain.

But as we are now arrived at that period when utility is neces-

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sarily and properly studied by all classes, it is not to the citizen alone that I should wish to appropriate these Letters. Those who enjoy the sweets of rural retirement, or who are wholly engaged in commerce or manufactures, may occasionally wish to know what impressions respecting rustic life and manners the prospect of the country and its inhabitants usually makes on the minds of those accustomed to the diversified and enlightened society in the metropolis of the British empire. Such feelings are natural to man; and curiosity, which has been considered a characteristic of genius, is certainly not less lively in the country than in the city: it excites to com-

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munication, and this leads to mutual improvement. They who have d uly appreciated the effects of rural tranquillity, and city bustle on the mind and manners, have laid the basis for justly estimating the pains and pleasures of social existence; they have advanced beyond the sphere of local embarrassments and prejudices, and are prepared to enjoy life in rational society. To this end intercourse must be admitted to be pre-eminently conducive. It is equally so in checking partialities, and removing those dispositions which condemn every thing different from the customary habits and pursuits. Should the ingenious admirer of rural life and rustic simplicity here

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find any reflections on the prevailing fashions and modes of behaviour in his own neighbourhood, let him consider how far they are just, and whether some melioration might not take place without any violation to the local feelings of the people. When the fashionable vices of the city have been converted into the favourite pastimes of the country, their deleterious effect on morals must immediately become apparent. It ought to be remembered, that the habitual custom of card-playing may soon degenerate into the ruinous practice of gambling. The moralist, who knows human nature, is convinced that the boasted simplicity of rural innocence is by no

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means an insuperable obstacle to the insidious progress of this bane of civil society. Those, therefore, who have been insensibly led into this species of amusement may learn from the candid observations of the traveller, the danger of a perseverance in such habits.

Without, however, detaining the reader longer on this topic, I shall here beg those gentlemen who have so liberally communicated to me many new and interesting facts and anecdotes relative to the different parts in which I sojourned, to accept my grateful acknowledgments. Were I, indeed, permitted to mention their names, their well known learning and talents, as

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well as their profound knowledge of the natural and civil history of this country, would confer a respect and popularity on these Letters to which they could not otherwise aspire.

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INTRODUCTORY

LETTER

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

DOWAGER COUNTESS OF WINTERTON.

GREATLY as I feel encouraged by the flattering wish your ladyship expressed to have my remarks on the manners, customs, and scenery in those counties through which I travelled during

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my *Summer Excursions*, I am, notwithstanding, timid in coming before the public in the character of any thing like a tourist. In forming the pages of fiction the imagination has liberty to range over the wide regions of fancy, but this privilege is lost in tracing the works of nature, or the incidents of life, as they pass before the eye. Subjects connected with arts, antiquities, and history, natural or historical anecdotes, which render a work not merely useful but interesting to the generality of readers, require much patient investigation and

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research. A taste for universal knowledge is become so prevalent, that it is not only one, but all the various branches of science which are necessary to confer popularity upon any work under the denomination of a Tour.

Should, however, the cursory observations I have the honour of submitting to your Ladyship, in any degree, contribute to your amusement, and that of the public, I shall feel proud in having become only an humble gleaner of the scattered fragments thought too in-

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significant to be collected by those who have travelled over the same ground before me.

I have the honour to remain,
dear Madam,
your respectful
and obedient servant,
E. I. SPENCE.

Weymouth-Street,
April, 1809.

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FIRST EXCURSION.

LETTER I.

TO THE COUNTESS OF WINTERTON.

DEAR MADAM, Usk, July 5, 1806.

I LEFT Bristol with —— yesterday afternoon, and reached the New Passage early in the evening. The diversity of rural objects rendered the road pleasant. After all I had heard of the celebrated view from King's Weston, when the Bristol channel opened upon me, the disappointment was extreme in having not merely the grandeur of the setting sun, reflected on the opposite coast, veiled from my eyes, but also the long stretch of the Welsh

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mountains, which were lost in the haziness of the atmosphere.

The situation of the Passage-house is flat and dull, though bounded by the majestic Severn, which derives its name from Sabrina; who, according to a traditionary fable, is said to have been "daughter of Locrine, king of Britain, by Estrildis, one of the three captive virgins of matchless charms, which he took after he had defeated Humber, king of the Huns, to whom they belonged. Locrine had divorced his former queen, Glendolen, in her favour. On the death of the British monarch, Glendolen assumed the government, pursued Estrildis and Sabra her daughter with unrelenting cruelty, and caused them to be drowned in the river, which, with a slight alteration, assumed the name of this innocent victim."

Milton styles this river,

"Swift, and guilty of maiden's death!"

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and in his Masque of Comus, he makes her the goddess of Chastity.

"Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure, &c."

The Severn, after a progress of 130 miles, flows into the Bristol channel; and, next to the Thames, is the most noble river in Britain. Of its beauty we were enabled to judge the next morning in crossing it, being then in a small boat which we hired with another party, consisting of some Bristolians.

A small boat is by far the most expeditious and agreeable mode of crossing the Severn. The expense, if only a single person hires it, is five shillings; but, divided amongst numbers, does not amount to more than the packet boat (ninepence), which is often filled with cattle or pigs, and is very tedious in its progress.

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Whether it were that my expectation of the country which I was about to see had been too highly raised I know not, but never was I so much disappointed as on my first entrance into Wales. The tedious, uninteresting ride of thirteen miles to Usk, over wretched and rugged roads through the gloomy forest of Wentwood, which afforded no partial openings to give the traveller a view of the country, tended only to excite melancholy instead of pleasure.

The town of Usk we found desolate in appearance; the grass actually growing in the streets; the houses irregular, and mean in their construction. It has a market once a week, which is finished by eight o'clock in the morning. From the little prospect of obtaining the most common provisions, conveniently, we abandoned the idea of procuring lodgings, and have taken up our abode at the inn.

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This town, the ancient *Burrium*, has been considered a Roman station. It had a priory of Benedictine nuns, but there are no remains of the building.

In the afternoon, between the showers, I strolled to the magnificent ruin of the castle, which, in gloomy pride, is seen from the inn window. It spreads over a large extent of ground; and from the eminence on which it is placed, is a grand object seen in various directions, and particularly from the bridge, which is of old-fashioned architecture. A profusion of ivy is interwoven in this fabric; and,

" As mid the ruins vast
It lifts its hoary brow, the mellow tints
That time's slow pencil lays from year to year
Upon the ancient towers, spread o'er the wreck
A grateful gloom; and the thick clouds that sweep
Along the darken'd battlements, extend
The melancholy grandeur of the scene."

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This castle was used in former times, according to tradition, as a fortress by the Welsh princes against the incursions of the English, but of its origin there is no certain account, though alleged by some of the inhabitants to have been first built before the time of our Saviour. Camden says, "At this day it shews only the ruins of a large, strong castle, pleasantly situated between the river Usk and Oilway, a small brook which takes its course east of Ragland," and that it was, "great, strong, and fair."

That it was strong is certain, from the thickness of its now dilapidated walls; though the inner court is so overgrown with weeds and nettles, where a poor solitary horse, which was feeding, could scarcely find subsistence, and its proud turrets are the habitation of crows. Yet the rude and scat-

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tered fragments proclaim it to have been once the abode of monarchy and splendid state. It is said that king Edward the Fourth, his children, and Richard the Third, have slept in it. The castle is the property of the duke of Beaufort; and some of the remaining part is now converted into a farm house.

Notwithstanding the insignificance of the town, its surrounding scenery is very beautiful. The Usk is a clear, flowing stream, richly fringed with wood; and the towering mountains, stretching towards Abergavenny and Pontypool, form a magnificent back ground to the landscape.

We dined on a fish called sewen, (*Salmo Eriox* of Linnæus) a species of the salmon, but higher in flavour than the trout.

On Sunday morning we attend-

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ed divine service in a small church, half a mile from the town, called Llanbaddock, standing on the skirts of a wood bordered by the river. The parish church of Usk is handsome in its exterior, but damp within, and without decoration.

The lower class of people possess much native civility, and we received a courtesy or a bow from every passenger. I was surprised to hear the English language spoken with more purity in Usk than in any provincial town I ever visited in England. The poor are wretchedly clothed, as well as extremely dirty, and very indolent. The children are chiefly without shoes and stockings.

There is a small manufactory of Japan ware at Usk.

Having spent three days very pleasantly at the inn, notwithstanding

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the first unpromising appearance of the place, we continued our journey, and with this intimation I now bid your ladyship adieu.

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LETTER II.

DEAR MADAM, Crickhowel, July 8, 1806.

We left Usk on Monday morning, and proceeded on our journey to Abergavenny. The day was showery; notwithstanding, the stage was delightful, the face of the country improving every mile in luxuriance and beauty. The grandeur of the mountains, hiding their heads in the clouds, the Usk flowing through a rich valley, pastoral and gay, with a variety of lovely objects, excited much admiration. We passed Clytha on the right, a modern Gothic mansion, surrounded by an extensive park.

The situation of Abergavenny is highly pleasing; and the lofty moun-

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tains which embosom it, when contrasted with its cultivated valleys, and the fanciful winding of the river, overhung by woody *dingles*, render the *tout en semble* worthy of enthusiastic admiration. The names of these Alpine mountains are the Blorenge, Skyrryd-vaur, and the Sugarloaf. I understand the height of the Blorenge is 1720 feet, that of the Skyrryd 1498, and the Sugarloaf 1852 perpendicular above the Gavenny rivulet, near the junction of the Usk.

In the appendix to Williams's Survey of Monmouthshire, we are informed that, "Skyrryd, or, St. Michael's Mount, has on its summit little more than the site of a celebrated chapel, much frequented before the reformation. Pilgrims from all parts of the island were made to carry away some of the holy earth brought hither from Jerusalem. The inclosure of the

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chapel is said to be annually visited on the festival of St. Michael. Arthur was said to have fought and slain a giant on St. Michael's Mount in Brittany."

Abergavenny is a large, respectable town, favourable in its aspect, and apparently containing several families of condition.

The Angel inn, where we dined, is large, expensive, and uncomfortable.

As we advanced towards Crickhowel, situated on the confines of Brecknockshire, the country opened upon us with a magnificence and beauty rarely to be equalled. I have travelled through some of the most admired parts of England, and the most bold and romantic parts of Scotland, but I never before beheld a scene so truly Arcadian as Crickhowel; and I almost expected to have seen

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shepherds and shepherdesses seated on the banks of its pastoral valleys.

Not any thing can be more enchanting than the first glimpse of the beautiful vale of Usk, with its limpid and sparkling river meandering through its smiling meadows, fringed with woods, and surrounded by wild and shapeless mountains. Yet, even amidst all this grandeur of scenery, nature seems here to repose in the most envied tranquillity, possessing a cheerfulness the most inviting: every object is picturesque and graceful. The chain of mountains which shuts out this happy valley from all the world is covered with verdure; and the white chimneys of gentlemen's villas which peep through the luxuriant woods, while they add a variety to the scene, give the promise of civilized society.

From the bad accommodation of the only inn at Crickhowel (the Bear),

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all strangers must naturally receive an unfavourable impression of the place, without they can dispense with comforts, and feast their eye, instead of appetite, on the enchanting landscapes.

The civility of the Welsh can scarcely compensate for the dirtiness of the inns you enter. Indeed, I could almost suppose the hedge ale-houses in the environs of London, were palaces when compared to the little inns in some parts of Wales. —— was almost afraid to go to bed, so filthy and wretched did the apartment look. Mine was no better; but ill health and fatigue made me glad to seek repose in any place that offered. In this village, however, we mean to sojourn awhile, if we can procure lodgings.

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LETTER III.

DEAR MADAM, Pen-y-dre, July 10, 1806.

I ADDRESS your ladyship from the sweetest cottage in the world. —— and I, charmed with the picturesque beauties of this neighbourhood, were induced to go in search of lodgings; and we were fortunate in procuring this small house, which is rural, elegant, and commodious, for its size. It is one, I am sure, which even you could condescend to admire, accustomed as you are to the grandeur of a London mansion. The front windows of our "*Fairy palace of delights*," as —— styles it, command a wide extent of magnificent views. The village church appears through the trees; little white-washed cot-

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tages are scattered on the brow of the hills; and the high road to Brecknock continually affords the amusement of passengers of every description.

Such is the delightful residence whence I now have the honour of addressing you. Indeed, when I left London, I had an idea of fixing in this part of Wales for the benefit of the fine air, and find it, as described, salubrious, yet fresh; and Zephyrus comes winged with health, so genial are his soft breezes to invalids. It was told me, that Crickhowel was a place much resorted to by valetudinarians for the benefit of goats' whey, but this must be a mistake, for I have not been able to procure any, greatly as I wished it; nor has one goat made its appearance in any part of Wales that I have seen: yet Abergavenny is certainly much frequented for that purpose.

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Neither have I seen any *Welsh bards;* nor heard the soft notes of the harp, and am half inclined to believe that the melody of such sweet sounds exists only in the creative imagination of travellers.

The hills abound with game, particularly grouse; and they are much visited by sportsmen. Provisions are rather difficult to be obtained without the trouble of sending to Abergavenny; for though there is a market once a week, it is indifferently attended. The articles brought are sold sufficiently reasonable. The mutton is excellent, and delicious in flavour.

The neighbourhood, as I guessed from the vast number of gentlemen's houses scattered about, is remarkably genteel and desirable; consisting entirely of old respectable families; and those to whom we have had the honour of being introduced, fully justify the

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national characteristic of unbounded hospitality and courtesy to strangers. Even amongst the peasantry, in former times hospitality must have been very universal; as it is recorded by Giraldus Cambrensis*.

* "There was not a beggar to be seen among these people, for their tables were common to all; and with them bounty, and particularly hospitable entertainment, were in higher estimation than any of the other virtues. Hospitality, indeed, was so much the habit of the nation, by a mutual return of such civilities, that it was neither offered to, nor required by, travellers. As soon as they entered any house, they immediately delivered their arms into the custody of the person of the family, and, if they suffered their feet to be washed by those who for that purpose chiefly offered water, they were considered as lodgers for the night. The refusal intimated their desire for a morning's refreshment only. The water for the washing of the feet was considered as an invitation to accept of hospitable entertainment. The strangers who arrived in the morning, were entertained until the evening with the conversation of the young women, and with the music of

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Crickhowel, bearing formerly the name of *Crug-hywel*, is very small, and rather mean in its appearance; but carries with it some remains of antiquity. The castle, standing on an abrupt mound, was called Alisby castle, but who was the founder is not known. There is little even of its ruins remaining, and it is surrounded by straggling cottages, inhabited by the poor. In the principal street is an ancient palace of the noble family of the Herberts, displaying now only a heavy wall, with a Gothic portal. The rude and ivy-mantled bridge at the end of the town leads to the canal,

the harp, for in this country every house was provided with both. Hence we conclude, that the people were not much inclined to jealousy. Such an influence had the habit of music on their minds, and its fascinating powers, that every family, or in every tribe, they esteemed skill in playing on the harp beyond any kind of learning." *Gir. Itin.*

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and along a pleasant pathway, centered in a verdant meadow, the pedestrian is carried to the rural village of Llangattock, reposing in the vale of Usk. This village is beautifully picturesque at a distance; but on a near approach I found it no otherwise interesting; for its cottages are not more wretched in appearance than its miserable dirty inhabitants, who, with extreme poverty, seem to unite extreme idleness and inactivity.

The walks on the banks of the Usk are luxuriantly beautiful; being embellished by the pretty villas of Admiral Gell, Captain Frederic, and some others; whose cultivated grounds enliven its borders. Perhaps there is not any spot in the principality that can boast so choice a neighbourhood as the small one I am describing; the inhabitants have a naturally graceful manner, which I have rarely seen in

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any country towns. The urbanity and hospitality of the Welsh families reminded me of the same qualities so conspicuous in *former*, and, indeed, in *present* days, at Shillinglee Park; and brought back to my recollection the cheerful benevolence which, beaming around, used to spread an universal sunshine over every happy individual in your ladyship's mansion.

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LETTER IV.

DEAR MADAM, Pen-y-dre, Aug. 2, 1806.

HAVING now spent nearly a month at Pen-y-dre, I find it a spot so entirely to my taste that I look forward to the necessity of leaving it with the deepest regret: this pretty cottage was let previous to our coming into it; therefore we must trust to chance for another abode.

With both leisure and inclination to explore the scenery of this neighbourhood, I find it, in every varied point, lovely beyond any thing I have before beheld. The principal mountains which encircle the vale are distinguished by the names of Crickhowel mountain (which fronts my window), and, to the southward, Cadair Arthur,

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or, Arthur's Chair; which, from its double-topped summit, derives that name; and, according to Camden, "This chair being on a high and steep place, is by the vulgar ascribed to the greatest and most sovereign British monarch king Arthur." Near this mountain issues a little murmuring stream, which borders Gwerne Vale, where a modern built mansion commands a wide extent of landscape; taking in with the vale of Usk, and its meandering river, the little modest church of Llangattock, and its white-washed village. In this church I heard divine service performed in Welsh; and regretted, from the impressive manner in which it was delivered, that it was in a langnage unknown to me. The Welsh only is spoken by the peasantry at Crickhowel. Crickhowel church is a poor structure, and the inside much out of

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repair; no flowers in any of the church-yards I have hitherto seen decorate the graves: a custom, I understood, universal throughout the principality.

The Welsh peasantry are thin and spare in their persons; with sallow complexions, and have no other marked character of countenance except singularly dark and beautiful eyes, which are very brilliant and expressive. Their salutations to each other are affectionately cordial; and even strangers have the salutation of a friendly nod or courtesy, *en passant*. The dress of the women is always a round black hat, such as worn by men, over a mob cap, and a long blue cloak is subjoined in the warmest summer's day. They will never walk if they can avoid it, and will ride, even to the number of three, on horseback, rather than endure the smallest bodily fatigue. All their conduct discovers a

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a surprising inertness, and there is little spirit of industry amongst them. The women do not seem to employ themselves either in knitting or spinning, therefore their poverty is extreme. The chief sustinence of the Welsh peasantry is bread, cheese, and potatoes. The men drink a great quantity of ale, and are not otherwise remarkable for sobriety. They are hasty and passionate in their tempers; yet, although naturally quarrelsome, are, in fact, harmless and benevolent.

An immense number of persons, amounting, I believe, to above a thousand, are employed at Mr. Kindall's large iron-works, within a few miles of Crickhowel. Crickhowel mountain furnishes both coal and iron; the former is carried in sacks on asses, and sold as low as one shilling per sack. The temperature

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of the climate is such, that wild strawberries are to be found in profusion in the lanes, and many garden-flowers grow spontaneously on the sides of the hedges; and *hypericum androsæmum*, or tutsan, and *antirrhinum*, or snap-dragon, is very abundant.

From our cottage at Pen-y-dree I have the honour of bidding your ladyship farewel!

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LETTER V.

DEAR MADAM, Monmouth, Aug. 6.

As the scenes of Pen-y-dree gradually retired from my sight, I cast "a lingering look behind," to take a last view of objects which had afforded me so much delight. It is probable I regarded them with partial affection, because at Pen-y-dree, after several months' illness, I first tasted the peculiar blessing of health; and as that returned, every sensation of pleasure arose with new joy, and the most trifling circumstance was viewed with a sensation of delight, which, at another time, might have been passed over: the magnificent scenery, how-

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ever, which surrounds Abergavenny soon awakened my attention. The sweep of mountains, with the craig, "*sweet named sugar-loaf*," towering above the Blorenge and Skyrrid, were objects too sublime to be neglected. On my second visit to the town I found it cheerful, clean, and agreeably situated: it was market-day, and the bustle among such numbers of persons assembled, with an ample stock of excellent provisions neatly displayed at a moderate rate, was an amusing sight.

The castle is seated on an elevation, with the sparkling Usk creeping at its feet; but the ruin itself has little beauty or interest in its architectural remains. This castle, as its history informs us, has oftener been stained with the infamy of treachery than any other castle in Wales. The priory is converted into a lodging-

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house, and so desirable a one did it appear, that —— and I would have passed a short time there could we have found any vacant accommodation. The terms are half a guinea a room, taken by the week. The priory is a handsome old building, situated in a sort of rude lawn, with a broad terrace in front. The apartments, notwithstanding their antiquity, are lofty and spacious, and the ascent to them is by a wide and grand staircase. The hall is converted into a boys' school, and is hung with some old portraits.

In the vicinity of Abergavenny there is a very elegant small villa belonging to Lady Harrington, the entrance to which is laid out with taste; and about two miles from the town is the handsome family mansion and pleasure-grounds of Court-y-Gollen. Adjacent to the priory is a gothic

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church; it contains some ancient monuments of the Herbert family, and there is also the effigy of an armed knight, with his feet resting on a greyhound. The sexton relates an interesting legend of this knight and his faithful dog; yet of its authenticity I have my doubts, because this same tale is related in a beautiful ballad, where the scene is laid adjacent to Snowden. Without, however, vouching for its authenticity, I am tempted, from the affecting simplicity of the poem, to insert it for your ladyship's perusal.

A BERTH-GELERT:

OR,

THE GRAVE OF THE GREYHOUND.

The spearman heard the bugle sound,
And cheerly smiled the morn,
And many a brach, and many a hound
Attend Llewellyn's horn.

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And still he blew a louder blast,
And gave a louder cheer;
Come Gelert, why art thou the last,
Llewellyn's horn to hear?

"Oh! where does faithful Gelert roam?
The flower of all his race,
So true, so brave, a lamb at home,
A lion in the chase."

'Twas only at Llewellyn's board
The faithful Gelert fed;
He watch'd, he serv'd to cheer his lord,
And centinell'd his bed.

In sooth, he was a peerless hound,
The gift of royal John;
But now no Gelert could be found,
And all the chase rode on.

And now as over rocks and dells
The gallant chidings rise;
All Snowden's craggy chaos yells
With many mingled cries.

That day Llewellyn little loved
The chase of hart, or hare;
And scant, and small, the booty proved,
For Gelert was not there.

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Unpleas'd Llewellyn homeward hied,
When, near the portal seat,
His truant Gelert he espied,
Bounding, his lord to greet.

But when he gained his castle door,
Aghast the chieftain stood;
The hound was smear'd with gouts of gore,
His lips and fangs ran blood.

Llewellyn gazed with wild surprise,
Unused such looks to meet;
His fav'rite check'd his joyful guise,
And crouch'd, and lick'd his feet.

Onward in haste Llewellyn past,
And on went Gelert too,
And still where'er his eyes he cast
Fresh blood-gouts shock'd his view.

O'erturn'd his infant's bed he found,
The blood-stain'd covert rent,
And all around the walls and ground,
With recent blood besprent.

He call'd his child; no voice replied;
He search'd with terror wild;
Blood, blood he found on ev'ry side,
But no where found his child.

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" Hell hound, by thee my child's devour'd!"
The frantic father cried,
And to the hilt, his vengeful sword
He plung'd in Gelert's side.

His suppliant, as to earth he fell,
No pity could impart,
But still his Gelert's dying yell
Past heavy o'er his heart.

Arous'd by Gelert's dying yell
Some slumberer waken'd nigh;
What words the parent's joy can tell,
To hear his infant cry.

Conceal'd beneath a maugled heap,
His hurried search had miss'd,
All glowing from his rosy sleep
His cherub boy he kiss'd.

Nor scratch had he, nor harm, nor dread,
But the same couch beneath
Lay a gaunt wolf; all torn and dead,
Tremendous still in death.

Ah! what was then Llewellyn's pain,
For now the truth was clear;
The gallant hound the wolf had slain,
To save Llewellyn's heir!

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Vain, vain was all Llewellyn's woe,
"Best of thy kind, adieu!"
The frantic deed which laid thee low
This heart shall ever rue."

And now a gallant tomb they raise,
With costly sculpture deck'd,
And marbles storied with his praise
Poor Gelert's bones protect.

Here never could the spearmen pass,
Or forester, unmov'd;
Here oft the tear-besprinkled grass
Llewellyn's sorrow prov'd.

And here he hung his horn and spear,
And oft as evening fell,
In fancy's piercing sounds would hear
Poor Gelert's dying yell.

And till great Snowden's rocks grow old,
And cease the storm to brave,
The consecrated spot shall hold
The name of Gelert's grave.

After surveying all that appeared worthy of notice at Abergavenny,

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we departed to Ragland, of which in my next I shall give your ladyship a description.

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LETTER VI.

Monmouth, Aug. 7.

It requires, dear madam, an abler pen than mine to give you an idea of the antique beauties of Ragland castle. We left our post-chaise at the inn, and proceeded on foot to the ruin, attended by two or three tattered children, whose mother proved a very communicative historian. The remains of this majestic edifice is placed on a gentle ascent, spreading wide its "ivy mantled towers." The entrance is through a heavy portal, with embattled turrets on each side, surrounded by a double moat. We descended some rude stone steps covered with

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moss and thistles, which brought us to the citadel, when we mounted a flight of steps half worn away, which conducted us to the top of a tower, whence we had an unbounded prospect of the country. Williams, in his Survey of Monmouthshire, tells us, "The Marquis of Worcester being eighty-four years of age, was besieged in his castle of Ragland by General Fairfax, in the time of Cromwell. Soon after its surrender the castle was demolished, the timber in the three parks cut down, and the loss of the family, which might be deemed personal property, was thought to be under-rated at one hundred thousand pounds, added to the forfeiture of an estate of twenty thousand pounds a-year."

A legend is recorded of a lady waving a yellow handkerchief from a window in one of the towers; hence

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it derives the name of the yellow tower. We were shewn from the tower into what was formerly a baronial hall, once the seat of banqueting, of revelry, and of song; now all solemn, silent, and mournful desolation. This hall is sixty-five feet in length; and on one side of it remains an enormous fire-place, with several windows, one of a larger size than the rest, and rendered remarkably beautiful from the wild exuberance of the ivy, which fantastically enwreathes itself in its interstices. Over the chimney-piece the carved arms of the Marquis of Worcester are still visible: traces also remain of the staircase leading to the music-gallery; but the hall, formerly the seat of grandeur and munificence, is now converted into a vulgar court for the game of fives. Beyond the hall stood the chapel, planted at present with

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apple-trees. The bowling-green is a resort for parties to spend the day at Ragland, and a table is spread under a huge yew-tree for their accommodation. The subterraneous dungeons I did not visit: —— told me they were so terrible, it was scarcely possible to conceive any human being could have been immured there. The present extent of the castle gives the spectator but an imperfect idea of its former capaciousness, and of the splendour of the entertainments held in it. Coxe observes that the establishment of the first Marquis of Worcester, in the records, preserved, appear like the retinue of a sovereign rather than a subject. The list of the household, and the method of living at Ragland, are stated below*.

* At eleven o'clock the gates of the castle were shut and the tables laid, two in the dining

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The foundation of Ragland castle was laid in the reign of Henry VII.

room, three in the hall, one in Mrs. Watson's hall, where the chaplains eat (sir Toby Mathews being the first), and two in the housekeeper's room for the ladies' women. The earl entered the dining-room, attended by his gentleman. As soon as he was seated, Sir Ralph Blackstone, steward of the house, retired. The comptroller, Mr. Holland, attended with his staff, as did the sewer, Mr. Blackburn. The daily waiters were, Mr. Clough, Mr. Selly, Mr. Scudamore; and many gentlemen's sons worth estates from two to seven hundred pounds a-year were bred up in this castle. My lady's gentlemen of the chamber were Mr. Fox and Mr. Morgan. At the first table sat the noble family, and such of the nobility as came there. In the dining-room, at the second table, sat knights and honourable gentlemen, attended by footmen. In the hall, at the first table, sat the steward, the comptroller, the master of the horse, the master of the fish-ponds, my lord Herbert's preceptor, with such gentlemen as came under the degree of knight, attended by footmen, and plentifully served with wine. At the second table in the hall (served from my lord's table)

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The parks were richly wooded with oak and beech-trees, and amply

sat the sewer, with the gentleman-waiter, and pages to the number of twenty-four. At the third table sat the clerk of the kitchen, with the yeoman, officers of the household, two grooms of the chamber, &c. Other officers of the household were, chief auditor, clerk of the accounts, purveyor of the castle, ushers of the hall, closet-keeper, gentleman of the chapel, keeper of the records, master of the wardrobe, master of the armory, grooms of the stable for the war-horses, twelve; master of the hounds, master of the falcons *, porter and his man, two butchers, two keepers of the house-park, two keepers of the red deer park. Footmen, grooms, and other menial servants to the number of one hundred and fifty.

* In ancient times the falconer was considered as one of the king's household, and was required to sleep near his birds; he had his bed in the king's granary. He was restricted to a certain measure of mead, and ale, that he might not neglect his duty. In spring he had the skin of a hind, and in autumn that of a stag, for gloves, to guard his hands. The eagle, the crane, the hawks, the falcon, and the raven, were considered as royal birds. When any of these were killed without authority a fine was paid to the king. *Warrington's Ancient History of Wales.*

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stocked with deer. Bishop Gibson mentions King Charles the First being entertained with extraordinary greatness and freedom three weeks in this castle. The ground which was once the parks (for there were three), and the fish-ponds, is now converted into fallow land. No deer are seen bounding over the plains; no clear streams invite the angler's sport; but all is ruinous waste and desolation in the extreme *.

It was late in the evening of yesterday when we reached Monmouth,

* In a field belonging to a farm that was formerly the red deer park of the castle is the site of Old Caert, in ancient times the residence of sir David Gam, of Welsh descent, and who rendered himself celebrated for his valorous conduct at the battle of Agincourt, and who is the Fluellen of Shakspeare's Henry V. Gam, in the Welsh language, means crooked, or deformed, from whence comes the term *game*, applied in ridicule, as a game leg, game eye, &c.

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a stage of five hours and a half in travelling only the distance of eighteen miles; the road from Abergavenny to Monmouth, by the way of Ragland, being so hilly and bad.

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LETTER VII.

DEAR MADAM, May-Hill, Aug. 9.

HALF a mile from Monmouth, on the Gloucestershire side of the river Wye, we have procured a pleasant lodging, which Mr. Bowles the poet, and his wife, have just quitted. This house is situated at the foot of a pretty hanging orchard, interspersed with a variety of trees and shrubs, with walks tastefully cut through them, forming a most agreeable pleasure-ground, in which I pass many hours; yet I cannot like May-Hill half so well as our sweet cottage at Pen-y-dree. Here, too, we have an interesting scene from the drawing-room windows.

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The bridge, with the translucent Wye, on which vessels are perpetually moving, with the amphitheatric range of majestic hills, and the town of Monmouth reposing in the valley, all tend to awaken the most lively admiration, and to shew how rich nature is in its beautiful varieties. The landscapes are soft and pastoral, nay, even sylvan, and by many would be preferred to the bolder ones of Brecknockshire. Thus does Mr. Bowles speak of this place.

Oh, Monmouth! thine are Nature's choicest pictures.
Her pencil dipt in Tivian's taste hath ting'd
Thy rich environs: blending soft the touch
Of grand design, and beauty-waving shade.
Genius of Gwent*! well may'st thou fondly smile,

* Gwent is derived from the word gwen, which signifies fair and beautiful; and is perfectly justifiable when applied to all these beautiful parts of the island watered by the Severn, the Wye, and the Usk.

Williams's Survey of Monmouthshire.

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While each enravish'd grace in love's sweet lay
Woos thy mild glance amid thy bow'ry groves:
With Nature hand in hand thou walk'st unseen.

These observations are not more highly poetical than they are just. Nature here is very graceful, certainly not sublime, but soft and tranquil; and so prettily adorned, no eye can trace its sweet varieties without being pleased. The beauties of the Wye being not only the theme of the poet but the favoured subject of the artist, who has so often painted its succession of lovely and fanciful forms, as to leave the feeble powers of verbal description, however glowing and animated, very short of giving an adequate idea of the rich diversity of its pictures.

This ancient town is situated at the confluence of two rivers, the Munnow and the Wye, terminated at

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each entrance by Gothic bridges. The approach by the road we took is over the Munnow, and tends to give strangers a very favourable impression of the place, as the principal street leading to the Beaufort arms is long and spacious, and contains several respectable looking houses.

The ancient name of Monmouth, according to Williams's Survey of the county, was *Gwent*, a district among the Silures, divided into Upper and Lower Gwent; and the chief town was called by the Britons Caer-went. After visiting the magnificent ruins of Usk and Ragland castle, that of Monmouth is almost too insignificant to mention. When it was pointed out to me, I imagined the person had mistaken, until again assured to the contrary. The access to the small remaining part of the castle, consisting of a broken wall and a window, said

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to belong to the chamber in which the great Harry the Fifth was born, is through a dirty stable-yard. My curiosity was soon gratified, and what had been excited was extremely disappointed. This castle is said to have flourished in the time of William the Conqueror, and to have been built by John, baron of Monmouth, from whom it descended to the house of Lancaster. Edward the Second was confined here for a short time when taken prisoner by Henry of Lancaster, in 1326, but he was afterwards removed to Kenelworth.

Monmouth gave birth to Galfridus Arthurius, bishop of St. Asaph, who was well versed in antiquity, and a compiler of British history.

Over the town-house is a fine figure of Henry of Monmouth, and the building is a noble structure; but there seems on the whole to be

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few antiquities annexed to Monmouth or its environs, and it is a spot more calculated to delight the artist, or the poet, than the antiquarian.

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LETTER VIII.

DEAR MADAM, May-Hill, August 10

We spent a very agreeable afternoon yesterday at the Kymin, an elegant pavilion erected by a number of gentlemen subscribers. It is situated on a vast eminence, for the accommodation of those persons who are disposed to gratify their tastes in one of the most unbounded views nature ever created. The ascent to it is very steep, through a thicket called Beaulieu Grove: but after the fatigue of a long walk, nearly perpendicular, the pedestrian is amply rewarded by the most magnificent panorama imagination could have formed.

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The pavilion is circular, and contains five windows, each commanding a varied landscape. One presents the counties of Gloucester and Hereford; next in succession are seen the famed hills of Malvern, with the elevations of Radnorshire; and in the valley, softly luxuriant, appear a few gentlemens' mansions spread along the borders of the Wye. From the front aspect the town of Monmouth, with its tall and elegant spire of St. Mary's church, and the bridge, are prominent objects, whilst in proud pre-eminence rise far beyond them Brecknock mountains, lifting their Apennine heads in glorious majesty to the clouds, to which they boldly swell.

There is tea provided, at a shilling, for each person inclined to pass an afternoon at the Kymin. Dinners are also dressed by giving timely no-

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tice. All strangers have access there every day, except on Thursdays.

The naval pillar erected adjacent to the Kymin has some excellent lines of Mr. Bowles's, which I insert for your ladyship's perusal.

WRITTEN IN THE TEMPLE DEDICATED TO NAVAL HEROES, ON THE KYMIN HILL, MONMOUTHSHIRE.

Stranger! if thou hast pass'd from vale to vale
A weary man, still thinking of thy home,
Seeking, perhaps, like me, the smile of health
From this aerial summit, where the gale
Comes soften'd to thy breast, thou may'st review
The winding of thy distant way; and think
Of those, who, far beyond yon mountain's range,
With rising hope, and sad solicitude,
Remember thee! But soon from social thought
Awaken'd, thy expanding heart shall beat
On all around; the hurrying eye surveys
Mountain on mountain heap'd, the living map
Of thy lov'd country: then let thy cold cheek
Catch instant animation at the thought
Of them who bled to save her. Chief of him

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Who pour'd the sanguine surge on Egypt's shore;
And hurl'd back the deep thunder, as of heaven,
On those, who vaunting, trampled on the laws
Of nature, and of God. He his career
Clos'd glorious; while he rais'd his dying eyes
To the loud shout of victory that pealed
Around him, as he sunk when Conquest's self
Hung down, and wet her banner with a tear!
Thou bless his memory, and revere their names
Whom the same patriot feelings fir'd, nor pass
Without a pray'r, that long as yonder hills
The circling mountains that record the name
Of the fifth Harry, nurtur'd 'mid these scenes,
Shall lift their tow'ring heads inviolate,
And reckless of the storm that rolls below;
So may thy country stand; nor ever want
Defenders, such as made proud Gallia pale,
And died the plains of Agincourt with blood.

The society of Monmouth I imagine to be like most country towns, social, but inelegant; consisting chiefly of opulent tradespeople, who have retired on their fortunes. There are monthly assemblies held during the winter, when I suppose the usual

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routine of visiting and card-parties go on with avidity; though this species of killing time does not seem so prevalent in Wales, if I may judge from what I have seen, as in many of the provincial towns, but more particularly great cities in England, where, among the higher classes, especially the families of the dignified clergy, rational and enlightened conversation is too frequently neglected.

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LETTER IX.

DEAR MADAM, May-Hill, August 12.

I WAS much pleased with the performance of divine service on Sunday at St. Mary's church, and never beheld a more true spirit of devotion than what appeared throughout the whole of a most respectable congregation. The general aspect of the church is handsome; it contains a good organ, and some monuments, but its decorations are few and simple. The exterior of this edifice is noble, particularly the steeple, and when seen from various directions is a very happy and striking object. In none of the church-yards I have

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visited have I seen the graves decorated with the mournful simplicity of flowers, spoken of as a custom prevalent throughout Wales, but perhaps it is from not having travelled into the interior of the principality. Monmouth, indeed, comes now under the denomination of one of our English counties, and here we lose all traces of the Welch character and appearance. The Gwentonians will scarcely allow themselves to be Cambrians, and are as tenacious on the subject as the Englishman who is placed on the banks of the Tweed is offended at being called a Scotchman. Yet one trait of nationality they preserve; that is, a dislike to strangers: for the Welsh, with all their native hospitality and courtesy to them, do not wish the English to encroach on their territories; and, from the perpetual influx of travellers, they

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seem afraid the luxurious extravagance of our nation will gradually tend to introduce expenses that they cannot well afford. There is much characteristic similarity between the Scotch and the Welsh; neither possess the unbounded wealth of the English, but they have pride of ancestry, and a frank hospitality, which, I am sorry to remark, although with more ability, is less common amongst our nation. According to Warrington's Ancient History of Wales, pride of ancestry, and nobility of family, were held in the highest estimation by the Welsh; and, of course, they were far more desirous of noble, than of rich and splendid, marriages. So deeply rooted was this spirit, that even the very lowest of the people carefully preserved the genealogy of their families, and were able to recite from memory the names not only of

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their immediate ancestors, but to the sixth and seventh generation.

There is another church in the suburbs of the town called St. Thomas's, a very ancient structure, supposed to have been built by the Saxons; and though now in almost a ruinous state, prayers are read there during the week.

On the Chepstow road, a mile from Monmouth, is a large mansion belonging to the Duke of Beaufort, called Troy house, once the property of the Herberts. The form of the building is inelegant and heavy: it has a prodigious quantity of windows, and no exterior beauty to recommend it; neither does the interior, I understand, contain any peculiar attractions worthy of the stranger's notice, except they wish to see the cradle that held Henry the Fifth, which is a relic preserved in this

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mansion. The river Trothy runs at the foot of a high wall inclosing Troy house, whence, probably, it derives its name: but its current is neither clear nor pleasing; it flows heavily, through a perfect wilderness, which rises above a rude stone bridge. Every river, it is true, must appear to disadvantage after surveying the translucent meanderings of the Wye, which takes such a succession of lovely and fanciful forms as must astonish every person unaccustomed to the many windings of this river; sometimes reflecting on its glassy bosom the pensile branches of the woods, whose green mantle is spread over its encircling hills; or, at others, the frowning precipice, or isolated castle, which, proudly seated on the cliffs, seem to forbid the bold approach of mortals.

There are some pretty villages

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seated on the banks of the Wye. Redbrooke derives its beauty from its picturesque situation; for its iron-works render it on a near approach disagreeable. On the road to Ross, White Church and Dixon are worthy of observation. The county gaol, situated on an eminence, wears almost the appearance of a castle at a distance: from its massive and respectable exterior it was some time before I could believe it was a place of imprisonment. It were to be wished, as in the present instance, that Mr. Howard's admirable and humane suggestions could be more universally adopted; in rendering these gloomy abodes more wholesome to the unfortunate and unhappy individuals who are immured within their walls.

E. J. S.

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LETTER X.

DEAR MADAM, May-Hill, Aug. 20.

INVITING as Monmouth appears, I cannot think it healthful even in summer, for during my residence at May-Hill, where I am not exposed to a low situation, so dreadful are the exhalations which environ the town, probably from the junction of the three rivers, that every morning and evening we are for several hours enveloped in a thick vapour. In the winter the meadows are so constantly flooded, that the road from May-Hill to the town is impassable: at present this serious evil is only temporary;

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and Chippenham meadow, a beautiful green plain bordered by the Wye, of an evening exhibits a very gay scene, being the favourite promenade; and of a Sunday evening is covered not only with all the gentry, but the lads and lasses of Monmouth.

There is an excellent market once a week, plentifully stocked at a moderate rate, and, at other times, the different shops furnish provisions. The common people are clean and neat in their appearance, but here throw off the courteous civility the Welsh invariably shew to strangers; and we find ourselves placed in an English town.

It is our intention to sail down the Wye to Chepstow, and visit all the romantic objects which we are told exist in that highly favoured district.

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IN CONTINUATION.

Beachly Passage-house, August 23.

WITH the prospect of the pleasantest part of our tour in view, never did the termination of one prove so entirely the reverse, nor ever was an agreeable arrangement so entirely defeated by a variety of extraordinary and perverse circumstances. The first intention of sailing down the Wye from Monmouth to Chepstow was abandoned, owing to the precarious state of the weather. To those persons who wish to survey the highly picturesque beauties of Monmouthshire, from what I have seen in my walks on the romantic borders of the Wye, the most delightful must occur in sailing from Ross to Monmouth, and thence to Chepstow. The expense is three guineas for a boat to go about thirty-seven

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miles, the charge being the same to one person as to a party. The morning was unfavourable when we set out from Monmouth, but the attractions of Piercefield led us to decide on leaving it on Thursday, as Fridays and Tuesdays are the days it is open for the reception of strangers. We were also to take Tintern abbey in our way, a most celebrated ruin.

Note.—The reader will find Tintern Abbey, Chepstow, &c. described hereafter.

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LETTER XI.

Bristol, August 23.

YOUR ladyship will admit it was extremely tantalizing to get a transient peep of so many lovely objects, and be compelled to bid them adieu; for I am persuaded, from the little I saw, that several days would prove insufficient to explore the romantic scenery of Chepstow. We just got a glance of the waving woods luxuriantly extending over the polished lawns of Piercefield; also the castle of Chepstow, proudly seated on the tall cliffs overhanging the majestic Wye. The bridge, on entering from the passage-side, places the town in a very favourable aspect to travellers, as from thence there is a commanding

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view of the castle, with the lofty summits of variegated rocks, richly fringed with wood, rising above the Wye, and spreading in wild magnificence towards the softer scenery of Piercefield, which it encompasses for several miles along the borders of the river; the natural beauties of which are considerably enlivened by the vessels continually moving on its surface.

Beachly, or old Passage-house, is far preferable to the new; the accommodation is better, and the people remarkably obliging. The inn is situated on a cliff, environed by detached pieces of black rock, which, jutting in the sea, render this ferry more dangerous than the new passage.

The following incident is said to have happened at this place. "Edward the elder came to Aust, and

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Leolin, petty Prince of Wales, to Beachly; the latter being backward to confer, and not crossing the Severn, Edward went over to him. As soon as Leolin saw and knew him, he threw off his robe of state, and went into the water up to his breast, and embracing the boat exclaimed, 'Most wise king, your condescension has overcome my pride, and your wisdom triumphed over my folly. Tread on that neck I have so foolishly lifted against you, and so shall you enter that land which your goodness has this day made your own.' He then took him on his shoulders, and made him sit there in his robe, and did him homage with his hands joined."

We staid all night at Beachly, and the next morning crossed in a small boat to a passage-house on the English shore, called Aust, or Aust Clieve,

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which derives its name from the high cliff projecting above a mile along the shore. Aust passage is three miles lower down the river, and distant about eleven miles from Bristol.

As we lost sight of the Welsh coast every object appeared insignificant. The elevated situation of Kingsdown seemed considerably diminished in height. Every object wore, as it were, a different aspect; and St. Vincent's rocks were almost divested of the grandeur I was wont to admire on a comparison with the scenery I had just quitted.

The lady at whose house I shall spend a week has one of the most desirable situations in Bristol, but "tower'd cities" are not formed to please me at present, nor any one thing attached to this spot.

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LETTER XII.

DEAR MADAM, Bath, Sept. 1, 1806.

On a general observation of the inhabitants of Bristol, I found them constituted of a circle entirely different from Bath: almost every person there is either occupied with business or religion; indeed, the latter is carried to such a height as borders on fanaticism amongst the different sectaries, from the perpetual occupation of attending their places of public devotion. God forbid that I should treat lightly the subject of religious worship, which is not only the first duty of life, but the solid foundation of every happiness both here and hereafter; yet, surely when necessary avocations are neglected, the

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regularity of families destroyed, and little else done but alternately praying, or eating, it is, at least, imposing on ourselves works of superorogation. This religious fanaticism is the more to be lamented, that the sectaries generally assemble in multitudes to listen to uneducated men; and return home without having either their minds improved, or their understanding enlightened, and do, indeed, build every thing on faith without works.

Your ladyship must pardon this digression, which I was led into from the observation of the decline of our episcopal church, and the rapid progress that methodism is making, not merely in this kingdom, but in the principality of Wales.

The wealth of the inhabitants of Bristol seems immense; their manners are those of a polished com-

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mercial people. Bristol has also been the favourite of the Muses: that extraordinary genius Chatterton here first drew breath, and in the noble building, Radcliff church, was concealed his original and obscure MSS. Southey also claims it as the place of his birth. Two females are entitled to bear away a sprig of laurel to immortalize their names; the misguided Mrs. Robinson, and the amiable author of the admirable comedy, "The School for Friends." I had almost forgotten to mention Mrs. Yearsely, who, notwithstanding her obscure origin, and uneducated mind, surprised the world some years since by her genius for literature.

I have not ventured, madam, to attempt any description of the romantic scenery of Clifton, or any account of Bristol hot wells, as on these subjects nothing new can be said.

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It being my intention to spend some months with my aunt, Mrs. Fordyce, at Bath, I shall, after adding the hope of renewing my correspondence with you at a future season, now take my leave of your ladyship, by assuring you how highly I consider myself favoured by your amiable condescension in allowing me this opportunity of saying with what respectful regard I have the honour, madam, of subscribing myself,

Your ladyship's,

most obliged and devoted

humble servant,

E. J. SPENCE.

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SECOND EXCURSION.

LETTER I.

TO THE COUNTESS OF WINTERTON.

Pyrton Vicarage, Oxfordshire, Aug. 16, 1807.

On closing my correspondence with your ladyship last autumn, it was then my intention, when I had the honour of renewing it, to give you a farther account of Wales, which I thought of visiting again. By a strange coincidence of events, after passing the loveliest of the summer months in London, at length I have bade it adieu to inhale the sweets of retirement at Pyrton Vicarage, on my way into Lancashire, a very differ-

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ent route to the one I had formed for myself; but which most willingly I was seduced into by the society of old friends, whose pleasing intercourse I had been deprived of for years, and therefore with joy embraced the renewal of a friendship formed at that early period of life, which is always cherished and remembered with peculiar fondness. My attachment to Mr. J——'s family was heightened by the recollection that it originated with my inestimable parents, at the time my father practised as physician at Durham, and of whose eminent skill, I am proud to add, your ladyship's noble family entertained a high opinion.

It is probable in my present route that little of the picturesque or sublime in scenery will present itself; however, as I shall travel through

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various counties all new to me, and see many places distinguished for their local beauties, it is my intention to offer such observations to you, dear madam, as I shall consider worth noticing in this tour.

Yesterday morning I left town, accompanied by my friend Miss J——: we reached Uxbridge, a short stage, so early as to spend some hours there very agreeably in walking about, as our travelling companion did not join us until the evening. The road from London to this place has nothing novel nor interesting to recommend it.

On Sunday we proceeded to High Wycombe, passing through Beaconsfield, in the church of which the poet Waller is interred, and whose family seat was adjacent to the town.

On entering Buckinghamshire the scenery greatly improved; from

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Loudwater it became very pretty, being richly diversified with hill and dale, and beautifully fringed with woodlands. Every object was cheerful; for nature was again dressed in the most lively verdure, occasioned by the genial rain which had fallen. After passing through High Wycombe we were presented with the elevated view of West Wycombe church, which is of the Doric order: placed on an eminence, it must arrest the traveller's notice, and excite admiration. This church was built at the expense of Lord le De Spencer in 1761.

A little beyond West Wycombe we left the high road and proceeded to Pyrton, a remote village in Oxfordshire. The situation is flat and dull, and has no rural beauties to recommend it, except what consists in the tasteful adornment of the plea-

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sure-ground surrounding the vicarage, which is perhaps one of the prettiest abodes you ever beheld. It is embowered in trees, with a lawn and shrubbery spread before the windows; and the exterior possesses some degree of elegance in its appearance. The little modest church with its white front peeps from amidst the luxuriant foliage which shades it, and that of the tall spire of a distant village; and the happy disposition of the trees, forms a beautiful vista from the dining-room window. The drawing-room presents an extensive view of the noble castle of Sherborne, belonging to the Earl of Macclesfield, encompassed by dark woods majestically bounding the plain. Oxfordshire is the least diversified of any of our counties; but at this season every spot where nature has liberty to unfold itself must be lovely, for every

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lane is a beautiful walk, and every hedge full of nosegays.

Mr. —— and his lady received us with much polite hospitality. In the latter (the daughter of a Scotch baronet) I found an old acquaintance of my mother's. I have seldom met with a lady of more pleasing manners; for she unites with genuine good breeding a softness and affability which are generally characteristic in persons of high birth.

I remain,

your ladyship's

obedient humble servant.

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LETTER II.

Oxford, August 21.

On Sunday afternoon I accompanied some of Mr. ——'s family to the adjoining church, where I beheld the father of his flock surrounded by a number of young people, assembled for the purpose of being instructed. The church is neat, and has the addition of a small organ placed there by Mr. ——, whose daughter, a pretty and engaging young lady of sixteen, performs as organist in a very masterly style, which brought to my recollection Mackenzie's beautiful story of La Roche.

After breakfast on Monday we

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resolved to spend the morning as inclination prompted; and Mr. —— kindly accompanied us to Sherborne castle. The walk across a pretty meadow took us into the park, when, winding through a deep and shady wood, we reached Lord Macclesfield's Gothic structure, surrounded by a moat and drawbridge; and the water is so limpid as to have the appearance of a sparkling river. The entrance to the castle is through an antique baronial hall, in which a quantity of armour is placed to so much advantage as to recal the days of chivalry and tournaments.

The interior of the building, though by no means spacious, has an air of comfort from being entirely divested of that gloom which too frequently pervades old mansions. The conservatory and pleasure-grounds are tastefully laid out; but I have

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seen many more lovely situations, though there is a consistency and harmony in every object which cannot fail to please. The park is by no means extensive; but it is agreeably clustered with trees.

Not more than six miles from Pyrton, in the village of Bristwell, at Bristwell-house, there is a convent containing, at the present period, twenty-five nuns of the order of St. Clair, which was one of the strictest orders in France. They came over at the Revolution. Their clothing is of coarse flannel, for they wear no linen, and they wear sabots or wooden shoes. They never taste animal food, and have no other bed than straw; yet so entirely has habit reconciled this hard fare, and rigorous mode of life, that I understand from Mrs. ——, who often visits them, they are not merely contented, but

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cheerful and happy. It was only a few hours previous to my leaving Pyrton that I knew of this establishment, or I should certainly have gone over to Bristwell.

On Wednesday we bade our friend adieu, and proceeded through Tetsworth to Oxford. The entrance into this city by moonlight gave it a very sublime appearance, and cast a solemn grandeur on its magnificent edifices rising in proud state one above another; for it is,

"Built nobly! pure the air, and light the soil:
Athens! the eye of Greece, mother of arts
And eloquence, native to famous wits,
And hospitable, in her sweet recess,
City, or suburb, or studious walks and shades!"

We are at the Star inn, which is very fashionable indeed, but very expensive, noisy, and disagreeable. A singular custom prevails in this house, that is, playing on the harp every

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evening in the hall, for the entertainment of the company. A visit to the different colleges is proposed; therefore, for the present, I will take my leave of your ladyship.

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LETTER III.

Woodstock, August 22.

It would appear strange to pass over in silence all the magnificent edifices I have been seeing, and lead you, dear madam, to believe I possessed neither curiosity nor taste to admire them, otherwise I should be tempted to go at once from Oxford to Blenheim without endeavouring to describe the different colleges of this noble city; for by many pens they have been handled in so able a manner, that, were it not from the probability these letters may meet the eye of some persons who have neither seen Oxford nor read any account of it, I should not be so pre-

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sumptuous as to speak of its stately buildings; however, as they struck me I will endeavour to describe them.

We took the different colleges and other establishments in the following order:

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE AND GARDENS.

The gardens are beautifully laid out. In the chapel of the college over the communion table is a fine piece of tapestry representing our Saviour breaking bread with two of his disciples. The hall is modern and elegant: it possesses a curious and magnificent chimney-piece of variegated marble. Above it is a fine picture of St. John the Baptist, by Titian. On the north wall of the chapel a marble urn contains the heart of Dr. Rawlinson, placed there according to his will.

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The architecture is peculiarly elegant from being adorned with noble Corinthian pillars. The roof is embellished with a fine allegorical painting. There are likewise on the walls three full length portraits of Archbishop Sheldon, the Duke of Ormond, and Sir Christopher Wren. This building will contain four thousand persons.

THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY.

The gallery of this library is replete with fine pictures. The School of Athens is one of singular beauty from the great variety of figures contained in it, all executed with the most masterly and happy expression in the attitudes and countenances of the figures. There is a striking portrait of Charles the Twelfth; also a good one of Mary, Queen of Scots. In

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the centre of the gallery is a noble statue in bronze of Lord Pembroke.

THE POMFRET STATUARY ROOM.

The figures of Minerva, Camilla, Agrippina, and Cicero, are very fine. The tomb of Germanicus is one of the curiosities brought from Herculaneum.

THE RADCLIFF LIBRARY

Is a most elegant rotunda, with a noble dome richly stuccoed. The books are arranged in two galleries rising one above the other, and supported by pillars, and every arch is festooned in a beautiful manner. But however admirable the interior of this edifice may be, the prospect from the leads was so sublimely grand, that I could only imagine I was looking down on all the pomp of ancient Rome when I observed

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from every point to which I directed my eyes, towers, steeples, pinnacles, domes, and turrets, all rearing and mingling their stately heads as they proudly extended over one vast plain. I was inspired with enthusiastic veneration as I gazed on these magnificent sanctuaries, which have been, and will be, the nurseries of science, genius, and taste. From the Radcliff library we proceeded to

CHRIST CHURCH.

The library consists of a suite of three apartments, hung with a variety of fine paintings, done chiefly by Italian artists. In the first, second, and third rooms the following ones deserve notice.

The Nativity.—*Corregio.*

Four Cartoons.—*Raphael.*

St. John, in the Isle of Patmos, writing the Revelations.

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A dying Magdalen.

Descent from the Cross.—*Corregio.*

The Nativity.—*Titian.*

The hall will contain one hundred and forty students. There is a curious arm-chair shewn which belonged to Cardinal Wolsey, who was the founder of this college; and a statue of him is placed over the gateway, with this inscription, "*Ever remembered within these walls!*" The hall is hung with the portraits of many distinguished personages, and among them a vast number of bishops.

Round the area is a broad terrace, which forms an agreeable walk, and in the centre is a fountain with a figure of Mercury.

The church of this college is a venerable structure, having formerly been the cathedral. We were shewn a curious shrine, called St. Bridewides, whence the church originally derived

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its name, but was afterwards called *Christ Church*. Adjacent to the college is a beautiful walk a mile in length, shaded on each side by lofty elms, and bounded by a pleasant meadow.

NEW COLLEGE

Has a chapel well calculated to inspire devotion from the solemn grandeur of its aspect. In walking down the aisle from the altar the attention is arrested by a Gothic window of painted glass, seen to the happiest advantage through an ingenious arch constructed in the organ for the purpose of effect. The subject is the Nativity, designed by Sir Joshua Reynolds. The altar is an elegant piece of sculpture, by Westmacott, in five compartments, containing in the following order:

The Salutation of the Virgin.

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The Nativity.
The Descent from the Cross.
The Resurrection.
The Ascension.

MAGDALEN COLLEGE

Is well worth notice: the west window is of painted glass in chiaro-scuro; the subject is the Resurrection. In the chapel, above the altar, is an exquisite painting of our Saviour bearing the cross, by the hand of Guido.

Visiting these different colleges was an eight-hours' pilgrimage, and to visit the whole of them would take at least a week. The carriage is driving round which is to conduct us to Blenheim, therefore I will bid your ladyship adieu.

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LETTER IV.

Chapel-House, August 23.

It is more than probable that your ladyship has been at Blenheim; yet I cannot resist giving you my opinion of it. After driving a short distance through the rock, our guide stopped us to observe a turret peeping through the trees, where Henry, Earl of Rochester, lived and died in the time of Charles the Second. We afterwards came up to a building called High Lodge, and at the distance of half a mile to an opening in the woods, through which we beheld the palace of Blenheim finely seated on an eminence, with a noble lake winding through a richly wooded valley. A stately bridge, resembling the Rialto

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at Venice, and the small picturesque town of Woodstock, with "its steady paths, and verdant groves," contribute to give animation to the landscape.

The lake, which is a quarter of a mile in breadth, and a mile in length, is an artificial piece of water, and derives all its beauty from Capability Browne. The palace was founded by Queen Anne. The last object we were shewn was a stately column, with a colossal figure of John, Duke of Marlborough, containing on the pedestal a long inscription signalizing the important victories he obtained.

The pleasure-grounds were too extensive to go over. At three o'clock we were admitted into a spacious and magnificent hall supported by Corinthian pillars. Two statues in bronze, one of the Venus de Medicis, the other a fawn, are very beautiful.

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The bow-window room contains various paintings and fine tapestry, representing the wars of the Duke of Marlborough; more of which tapestry on the same subject is to be seen in the other apartments. It is impossible to enumerate the pictures; I shall therefore merely name the following ones, which every connoisseur must admire for their exquisite design and execution.

The Duchess of Buckingham.—*Vandyke.*

Lord Henry and Lady Charlotte Spencer: the latter a gypsy, telling her brother's fortune.—*Sir J. Reynolds.*

A Magdalen.—*Carlo Dolce.*

Not any thing can exceed this picture; the expression of the countenance of the Magdalen is touched with such tender melancholy, blended with the most fervent devotion.

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Isaac blessing Jacob.—*Rembrandt.*

Lord Stafford: his secretary reading his condemnation.

Seneca bleeding to death.—*Lucca Giordano.*

In the chapel is an elegant monument of most beautiful sculpture, by Ryesbrack, representing the Duke and Duchess with their two sons supported by Fame and History.

The china room is very pretty, from the fanciful manner in which a large assortment of curious and old-fashioned china is disposed in various compartments.

Blenheim, notwithstanding its magnificence, will seldom, in my opinion, excite admiration, there is such a heavy pomp in its appearance. It is more fitted for a palace of state than a mansion to dwell in, as there is not a single apartment which has the least air of comfort.

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The stage from Woodstock to Chapel-House is through a very poor and dreary country.

Halford-Bridge, Aug. 24.

This morning we left Chapel-House and proceeded on our way to Warwick, but on stopping to change horses, we were so much attracted by the beauty of this situation, as to be induced to ruralize for the remainder of the day; and no spot is more happily adapted for it than Halford-Bridge, such a sweet tranquillity reigns here.

We took leave of the barren county of Oxford at Long Compton, and afterwards passing through the small town of Shipton, on the confines of Worcestershire, entered the beautifully diversified county of Warwick. It is a part of England I had never before seen; and I am charmed with

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the cheerful fertility which signalizes every part of it.

This village rests on a gentle declivity, and from the pretty bow window of our apartment I command a wide extent of landscape, rich, smiling, and lovely, backed by the hills of Gloucestershire, while the distant spire of Tredington church rises gracefully in perspective. A neat bridge thrown over the river Stour terminates this peaceful village, which is replete with comfortable dwellings, built of stone, neatly thatched, and divested of the appearance of either poverty or wretchedness. The lands, chiefly consisting of pastures filled with sheep and cattle, are beautifully luxuriant, and peace and plenty seem alone to dwell here. The dialect of the peasantry has nothing provincial, and is rather harmonious.

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Such is this little sequestered spot, which contains the tranquil and pleasing scenes of rural life.

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LETTER V.

Stratford upon Avon, Aug. 25.

'Twas "Here that sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warbl'd his native wood-notes wild." *Milton.*

But, at present, I must digress from the subject of Shakespeare, though I shall find some difficulty, my dear madam, in describing the lovely scenes I have beheld this day.

We left Stratford bridge in sufficient time to visit Warwick castle before dinner. The country, as we advanced, still improved in luxuriance; and I must consider Warwickshire one of the pleasantest parts of

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England; the landscapes are so diversified and rich, the soil so dry, the air so pure, yet soft, with such a happy combination of objects to please the eye, and a climate so genial to health. The approach to Warwick is pretty: the noble steeple of St. Mary's church is seen at some distance, and the main street, terminated at each extremity by a wide arched gateway, is spacious and regular; but the pavement is remarkably bad.

We lost no time in going to the castle. I was pleased with the Gothic antiquity of Sherborne, and surprised at the grandeur of Blenheim; but there is a bold magnificence about Warwick castle I am inadequate to describe: of such castles we often read in romance, but they seldom meet the eye. The approach is between fractured rocks, projecting in gloomy majesty on each side, over-

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hung with rich woods, the pendant foliage of which sheds a sombre aspect on all around. The edifice, with its painted roofs, antique solemnity, embattled and "ivy-mantled towers," is seated on a rock forty feet in height, with a clear and sparkling river at its base, which, falling in a cascade, flows through a beautiful park.

Proceeding through a Gothic portal into a rude lawn, we were ushered by a flight of steps into a noble hall, and thence found ourselves in a suite of magnificent apartments: they contain several valuable pictures, chiefly by the hand of Vandyke. There is a piece by Rubens, of two dogs, exquisitely fine; and the inside of a church, by Deloraine, which gives the effect of distance in a surprising manner. We passed through a curious long passage, filled with armoury, and terminated with an admirable

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portrait of King Charles the Second on horseback.

In surveying such a magnificent domain as Warwick castle, which takes in all the imagination can form to render possession desirable, the spectator is filled with a sentiment of regret when told, that its noble owner has not a fortune adequate to the support of so splendid an establishment as such a place requires; and that after having in former years entertained all travellers, whose taste led them to visit Warwick castle, with the old-fashioned rites of English hospitality, in not merely regaling them with refreshments, but serenading them with music, his lordship, from prudential motives, has, for some years, been compelled to withdraw with a numerous, lovely, and amiable family from an abode where nature has been so profuse; leaving a me-

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lancholy instance, how fleeting are the enjoyments of heaven's most liberal gifts!

St. Mary's is a noble building; the steeple is beautiful; and the inside of the church is spacious and handsome: the chancel, from the middle aisle, has a good effect. The chapel adjoining contains three noble monuments of great antiquity, which my travelling companion Mr. —— much admired; he is an antiquary, and sometimes, to the trial of my patience, who have little taste for antiquities, we spend many hours shut up in old churches and cathedrals, where I often begin to think my friend and myself are destined to pass the day. In St. Mary's we saw the effigy of the Earl of Leicester, the favourite of Queen Elizabeth, together with one of the great Earl of Warwick, clad in complete armour of brass. Adjacent to

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Warwick is Guy's Cliff, where Guy, Earl of Warwick, built a chapel, and terminated his life in the character of a hermit. In the castle are shewn his sword, armour, and iron shield; also the porridge-pot he ate out of. Whether such a man existed seems doubted by some antiquaries. Camden says, "The story of Guy is so obscured by fable, that it is difficult to ascertain its authenticity." He further, however, adds, "There might be a great warrior of the name of Guy; and Coleman, or some other genius (Coleman was a monk of Worcester, who died A. D. 1113), to ingratiate themselves with the powerful Earls of Warwick, were pleased to give him that title to embellish his story with this combat, after the model of David and Goliah; and as the story was invented after the Norman conquest, it is from thence that

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we hear of Jerusalem and the Saracens, the introduction of both which cannot be easily accounted for upon supposition. The inventor, however, has fully gained his ends; for it appears that Guy afterwards became a christian name of the Beauchamps, Earls of Warwick, in honour of the champion, and that his story was pourtrayed in the old hangings at Warwick castle."

After spending an agreeable day at Warwick, we reached this celebrated place early in the evening.

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LETTER VI.

Lichfield, Aug. 25.

PREVIOUS to leaving Stratford-upon-Avon we visited the obscure little dwelling where the immortal Shakespeare was born: his memory is held in the highest veneration by the inhabitants of Stratford; and the butcher's wife, who professes to be a descendant of Shakespeare's family, seems to have caught a degree of his fire, she related every anecdote of him in so spirited a manner. A board hung out at the butcher's shop with these words, "William Shakespeare was born in this house," notifies to strangers without trouble or enquiry

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the birth-place of this great dramatist, visited by persons of every degree, even from the poet to the prince, and, no doubt, will be for succeeding generations, for never were his works in higher estimation than in the present day: in one corner of the chimney of a miserable kitchen is the relic of what was once the wooden chair in which he used to sit, and above stairs we were shewn the chamber "where he first breathed material air."

The inn of the White Lyon was formerly called the Shakespeare, and his portrait, which was the sign of the house, is now placed on the staircase, and none of the rooms retain the names of his plays, except one, still called "The Tempest."

From the butcher's we proceeded along the cheerful banks of the Avon, and while I gazed on the beautiful river I repeated to myself the fol-

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lowing lines on Shakespeare from Gray's Progress of Poesy.

" Far from the sun and summer gale
On thy green lap was nature's darling laid,
What time, where lucid Avon stray'd;
To him the mighty mother did conceal
Her awful face; the dauntless child
Stretch'd forth his little arms, and smiled;
'This pencil take,' she said, 'whose colours clear
Richly paint the vernal year;
Thine too these golden keys, immortal boy!
This can unlock the gates of joy;
Of horror that, and thrilling fears,
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears."

In the chancel of the Holy Trinity a stone with an inscription, said to be written by Shakespeare, *mark the spot where he lies**. Over his monument there is a Latin inscription.

* " Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
To dig the dust inclosed here;
Blest be the man that spares these stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones."

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The church is a venerable structure; and known to be ancient, though, from its frequent repairs, it does not carry that appearance.

I brought away a small piece of what I was told was a part of the celebrated mulberry tree, but am rather incredulous on that subject.

Garrick here celebrated a Jubilee in honour of Shakespeare in the year 1769.

From Stratford we proceeded to Hockley-house, passing through a town consisting of one street, called "Henley in Arden," on the confines of the forest of Arden, which I imagine to be the same forest wherein Shakespeare lays the scene in his beautiful comedy of "As you Like it." We dined at Hockley-house, whence we resumed our journey towards Birmingham, which has been styled *the toy-shop of Europe.* The ap-

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proach to it is handsome: the immense extent of the town surprised me; but, on entering it, the close air, ugly houses, and long narrow streets, made —— and myself wish, after inhaling the grateful and pure air of an open country, to proceed; and we left Birmingham with no desire to survey more of it than as mere birds of passage. Notwithstanding so transient a view of this place, I believe it is considered the second manufacturing town in England; I observed the immense traffic carried on, and the vast variety of shops presenting such a rich display of useful articles of almost every sort, with pleasure; and much praise is due to the mechanics of Birmingham for their industry, as well as astonishing ingenuity.

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LETTER VII.

DEAR MADAM, Lichfield, Aug. 26.

We attended the cathedral service at Lichfield this morning; the exterior of this truly venerable edifice is magnificent, and its three pyramidal spires add exceedingly to its beauty. It is in good repair; and lately has had the addition of some painted glass of great antiquity brought from a convent in France, which now fills the windows in the chancel. The nave is long and handsome; the decorations are well finished, and in the highest preservation. Here are but few monuments; but one of them is a beautiful piece of sculp-

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ture, to the memory of Lady M. W. Montague. Dr. Johnson, I scarcely need inform your ladyship, was a native of Lichfield: there is a monument erected to his memory in this cathedral; likewise one to Mr. Garrick, with the following inscription written by the doctor:

His death eclipsed the gaiety of nations, and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasures.

In the south-west corner of the close, in this city, is an old prebendal house, at present belonging to the Rev. Mr. Nares, one of the canons of the cathedral, which contains a large hall celebrated for having been the place in which David Garrick first exhibited his theatrical talents in the character of Sergeant Kite, in Farquhar's comedy of "The Recruiting Officer." He was then about fourteen years of age. The play was

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performed by Garrick and several of his school-fellows for their own amusement; but, it is said, his performance at that period was not particularly distinguished by any superior display of those wonderful talents which afterwards excited the applause of the world, and drew on him such unrivalled fame. He continued to shew so great an inclination for the stage that his father, Captain Garrick, was induced to send him abroad, in hopes of diverting his attention from the pursuit; but, on his return, the ardour increased, and he very early in life began his successful career on the London boards*.

Captain Garrick's residence in Lichfield was near the bridge, in Bird Street, and the house was lately

* The reader will find a further account of Mr. Garrick's performance in the Third Excursion.

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occupied by David's younger brother, Peter Garrick, Esq.

Lichfield also gave birth to Mr. Camden's father, and to Elias Ashmole the antiquary. Dr. Darwin, who made the first translation of Linnæus, was an inhabitant of this city. He likewise instituted a botanical society here. Miss Seward (rather an admired poet of the present day), is resident in the bishop's palace.

Newcastle-under-Line.

The county of Stafford appears to vie with Warwickshire in its pastoral and luxuriant scenery. We dined at Wolesly bridge, a rural inn, situated on the river Trent, and encircled by green hills fringed with woods which sweep along its banks. It is rendered particularly cheerful by the variety of noblemen's mag-

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nificent seats which in all directions meet the eye.

We passed through Stone, a small town in Staffordshire; the situation is low, and, I should suppose, unfavourable to health, for it was enveloped in exhalations. This place, according to Camden, had its rise in the Saxon times, and its name from those stones which our ancestors were accustomed yearly to heap together to preserve the memory of the place where (as has been said) Wolphere, that most heathen king of the Mercians, barbarously slew his sons Vulfuld and Rufin for turning Christians; at which place, when after-ages had consecrated a little church to their memory, a town presently grew up, which the History of Peterborough tells us, was afterwards called *Stone* from these stones.

We have just reached this place,

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after a fatiguing stage over the most rugged road I ever travelled. Newcastle-under-Line is large and populous, but the streets, though wide, are very mean in appearance, and the houses are dirty and low. It is surrounded by coal pits; and the largest quantity of stone-ware is made near this place than about any other in England.

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LETTER VIII.

DEAR MADAM, Warrington, Aug. 27.

FINDING we were to pass Hagley, this name naturally brought to my recollection the celebrated seat of Lord Lyttelton, together with his beautiful Monody: the shades of Hagley were all before me; I longed to wander amidst those woods made vocal by his lays: already I saw

"Its tufted groves, and gently falling rills,
Its high o'ershadow'd hills;
The lawns gay smiling with eternal green."

And was filled with a momentary enthusiasm on approaching so distinguished a spot: it was not, however, Lord Lyttelton's, but Lord Curzon's

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Hagley. This lovely place, though not extensive, is formed to please; for there is a sober beauty in the disposition of the pleasure-grounds, bordered by a flowing stream, united with the pensile woods waving over it, which courts the mind to retirement.

The actual situation of Warrington is pretty. The entrance is by a handsome stone bridge over the river Mersey; but the town, though large and populous, is mean, for the streets are poor, and few of the houses genteel in their appearance. The last two stages we have been deprived of the comfort of southern inns, and the traveller who desires cleanliness and alertness will not grudge the more expensive charges of those nearer the metropolis. The dirtiness of the people here exceeds what I could have believed in any part of this kingdom.

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Bolton, Aug. 27.

We are now but one stage from our journey's end, which I do not regret, having travelled for the last forty miles over rugged stone pavement, jolted almost to death. I was greatly astonished, as we advanced into Lancashire, to observe the uncivilized appearance of the lower orders of the people, and the extreme wretchedness of their condition, which, though perhaps a harsh epithet, seems to approach almost to barbarism. The apparel of the women in some of the villages we passed through was scarcely decent, and all the children were without shoes and stockings. From Warrington we proceeded to Wigan, where there is a celebrated spa of the nature of the Harrowgate waters. It is surrounded by coal pits, and is

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noted for the cannel coal, which, besides the clear flame it yields in burning, is curiously polished into the appearance of black marble. Sugar-boxes, spoons, snuff-boxes, &c. which had the appearance of ebony, were presented to her majesty. I have heard a dinner service was once made out of this coal, which, after the entertainment, was demolished in the fire.

Bolton, whence I address your ladyship, though situated on a dreary moor, commands an extensive view of a fine open country, which, without being highly cultivated, is pleasing in its aspect.

We are now preparing to pursue our journey to my friend's hospitable mansion six miles from Manchester, having with regret this moment bade adieu to our agreeable

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travelling companion, and, for the present, I shall do the same to your ladyship.

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LETTER IX.

Stand-hall, Sept. 4.

I WAS much surprised at the beautiful situation of this spot; and, to those persons who are fond of an open country, and pure air, Stand-hall is a most desirable residence; though, to my feelings, in a very ungenial climate, for it is not here "*The gale comes softened to the breast;*" and the perpetual rains which fall have prevented my going abroad to survey "the goodly works of nature," and admire, until to-day, the sublimity of the landscape.

The large town of Manchester

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spreads along the valley in front of the house at some miles distance, and the less one of Bury is seen distinctly to the left, surrounded by villages, with simple cottages dispersed along the plain. The hills of Lancashire, Derbyshire, Cheshire, and Yorkshire rising in succession, spread in a vast amphitheatre, till lost in the immensity of space; while the rugged tops of the Welsh mountains, which I gazed upon as old friends, hide their heads in the clouds, of which they seem to form a part.

The dialect of this country is peculiarly unharmonious to the ear, and when spoken by the peasantry is scarcely to be understood. All the lower orders of the people are employed in the manufactories; and the dress worn by the women is a long bed-gown, black stockings, and a mob cap hanging open from the ears.

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The neighbourhood abounds with families of immense wealth, and reminds me of what Clapham Common is to London. The villas of the gentry are handsome, and their pleasure-grounds are tastefully laid out. The rich woods and green park of Heaton-house, the seat of the Earl of Wilton, appear from the terrace of Stand-hall to much advantage: but the most prominent feature in this landscape is the pretty church of Prestwich, a rectory in the possession of the Rev. T. L——; a gentleman, I understand, universally respected by his parishioners, and highly esteemed by the community. What an edifying example does my Lord Wilton set by attending this church every Sunday, not only with the whole of his noble family, but also in being followed by the men and women of his household, who all conduct them-

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selves with the most becoming reverence! This noble example of his lordship tends to assemble a very numerous and respectable congregation, even from distant parts.

The neighbourhood is exceedingly populous, and much visiting takes place. Polite visitations pour in upon us, but the ceremonious forms of these visits were sometimes tedious. I admit, however, that if we live in the world, it is proper to conform to the manners of it. From the eulogium I have heard Mr. J—— bestow on his friend and neighbour R. K——, Esq., I am persuaded that more than one country may boast a "Man of Ross," and that such a one resides in the vicinity of Stand-hall.

I wish I could tell your ladyship that the peasantry were possessed of that native simplicity we expect to find two hundred miles from the me-

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tropolis; their manners accord with their rude and uncultivated appearance, and their demeanour is remarkably forbidding; but this, I understand, is often the case near manufacturing towns, though it is the first time I have had the opportunity of observing it.

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LETTER X.

Stand-Hall, Sept. 5.

I WENT yesterday evening, accompanied by my friends, to the Manchester theatre, to witness Mrs. Siddons's performance of Lady Macbeth, with the after-piece of Catharine and Petruchio, in which she was to perform Catharine for her own benefit. This pre-eminently great actress has, for several years, been so entirely the theme of public admiration to the real amateurs of the drama (for some we still possess), that it would be superfluous to dwell on her exquisite powers—powers that even in former times, when the stage was in its meridian

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glory, could not be excelled, and would have awakened astonishment and admiration. But to give your ladyship an idea either of the little taste, or the prudent economy, of the inhabitants of Manchester in permitting her to perform to empty benches; I need only mention that after the other evening, on sharing the profits with the manager, she was rewarded with the sum (shall I commit it to paper?) of *Seven Shillings!* *

You may trust to the authenticity of this anecdote, as Mrs. Siddons related it herself, on leaving the theatre, to a family where she was on a visit.

I would add much on the fluctuation of popular opinion instigated by prejudice, were I not sure that even in this season of mimickry and pup-

* There may, indeed, have been a moral cause for this, rather than a want of taste, or parsimony.

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pet-shew, such talents as Mrs. Siddons's are duly estimated by thousands of individuals, who know they "*Shall never see her like again.*" What Dr. Johnson said of Mr. Garrick is fully illustrated in her; "That till *he* appeared Shakespeare was not understood:" and it is further added of that wonderful man, in the Life of Dr. Beattie, "If all actors were like Garrick, I do not think it would be possible for a person of sensibility to survive the representation of Hamlet, Lear, or Macbeth." May it not be said of Mrs. Siddons, that her Belvidera and her Isabella affect the mind to a degree of sorrow bordering on agony, and leave an impression on the spirits not quickly removed?

After so often weeping with her in tragedy it was enchanting to see her smile. But Dr. Beattie likewise speaks of her attempting in early

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life, with considerable success, several comic parts, which the instance in point gives credit to. It would be a pity that she should degrade her talents by applying them to modern comedies.

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LETTER XI.

Craigg-hall, Cheshire, Sept. 20.

THE mansion whence I now have the pleasure of addressing your ladyship is in one of the neatest situations nature ever formed, and is so encompassed by hills, that while I gaze on them I can only fancy myself, by some unforeseen event, transported, I will not say to the Highlands, but to the wildest part of Scotland. Were it not for the taste of G. P.—— Esq., who has built here an elegant mansion with every appendage to render life agreeable, a stranger would be fearful to approach a situation apparently so desolate. Mr. J——, of Stand-hall, observing the desire I had to explore some of the curiosities of

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his neighbouring county, with the most friendly wish to indulge that desire, and promote the gratification of his guest as well as his sisters, proposed a little tour into Derbyshire; and thus far we are on our way thither.

Yesterday morning we left Standhall, and breakfasted at Manchester; a town much on a par with Birmingham and Bristol, though the latter has considerably the advantage in its antiquities, as well as in the adjacent and elevated beauties of Kingsdown, whilst the city is enlivened by the immense shipping spread along its noble quay. Manchester, it has been said, "Was formerly destroyed in the Danish wars; and because the inhabitants behaved themselves bravely against them, they called their town Manchester, that is, a city of men, and of this notion they seemed

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strangely fond, as seemingly much to contribute to their honour." Its name, however, has a far higher etymology; for, according to Whitaker, it is derived from the *Mancenion* of the Britons, signifying the Place of Tents, and the Castrum, called *Chestre* by the Saxons, that was built here when it became a Roman station.

It is a very large town, but the streets, for the most part, are inconveniently narrow, with very few noble buildings, or handsome houses. The population is immense, and the traffic considerable; and it has acquired great celebrity from its extensive manufactories, so productive all over the kingdom.

After changing horses at an insignificant place, called Bullock's Smithy, we had a beautiful drive to Stockport (also a considerable manufacturing town), and thence to Macclesfield,

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passing by the way of Poynton, a noble seat of Lord Bulkley's, richly wooded, and deriving great beauty from a fine piece of water flowing through the park.

Some parts of Cheshire we travelled through were extremely luxuriant, but on leaving Macclesfield the features of the country assumed a different character; and from the soft and pastoral plains bold hills arose on all sides, and nature at once wore an aspect so rude and cheerless as filled us with dread. The road, considering the perpetual ascent and descent, was remarkably good, but the hills were tremendous, and often we alighted, as walking was the safest method of proceeding. The day was remarkably fine; and the streams of that light emitted from the sun-beams rendered the rich variety of shades on the barren and rugged steeps very beau-

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tiful. The cottages chequered on their edges, and just peeping through the clusters of trees that embowered them, with the sheep and cattle brousing on these solitary wilds, in some degree tended to dispel the gloomy aspect of these apparently inaccessible regions.

To-day we were to have climbed a prodigiously high hill opposite Craigg-hall, called Shutlingslaw, but the rain beats on the windows, and the cold wind "*blaws wi' angry sough*," that we are glad to draw round a cheerful fire, though in the month of September, instead of exploring the romantic and desolate scenes of a spot which, in my opinion, can scarcely prove a desirable retreat even in the meridian of summer.

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LETTER XII.

Castleton, Sept. 21.

AFTER bidding adieu to Mr. P—— and his fair sisters at Craigg-hall, my companions and I directed our course towards Buxton, journeying amidst cheerless mountains and moors, where no trace of vegetation was to be seen. These lines of Churchill's never were more applicable than in the present instance.

"Far as the eye can reach no tree was seen;
Earth clad in russet scorns the lively green."

The few inclosures which divide the lands were all of stone, and the only objects that appeared to enliven

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the scene were the sheep and cattle scattered on the hills, so bare of herbage, it was a matter of surprise how they could find food.

Buxton is a small town, or rather village, and would be really insignificant were it not for its magnificent crescent, the beauty of which has been much extolled; and, notwithstanding my having seen the elegant and stately ones of Bath, I must say that of Buxton merits admiration. The other place of resort for the company is called the Hall. The expence of the public table is seven shillings a-day. There is a variety of baths; but the public manner in which the invalids bathe must be very disagreeable: no objection was made to females being admitted; and, when ushered through the dressing-room, a number of ladies were assembled, undressing, to go into the bath. The

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waters, in the softness of their taste, are much like those of Bristol hot-wells. Buxton is situated in a valley, overhung by barren hills, which gives it a very dreary appearance, and, except a plantation of the Duke of Devonshire's, consisting of gloomy fir-trees, is wholly destitute of cultivation. There seemed to be little company in the place, and the few people we saw were chiefly invalids. The day proved wet, which probably added to the cheerless aspect of the place; but I have since been told that almost perpetual rains fall in that part of the country *.

* Buxton, however, according to Camden, "Was a place of some note before Queen Elizabeth's reign. St. Anne was then the patroness of the place, and its waters were in high request, both for drinking and bathing; at this time accommodations were provided for the reception of patients.

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Leaving Buxton, we again journeyed amongst the wilds of Derbyshire, until the most prodigious mountain I ever beheld presented itself, which, on being told I was to descend, filled me with terror, as the rain rendered it impassable, except in the carriage. This tremendous rocky

"Mary, Queen of Scots, was brought with the Earl of Shrewsbury and his Countess to Buxton in one of his visits to that place, upon which occasion this accomplished and unfortunate princess applied to Buxton Cæsar's verses upon Tettria by some alteration.

'Buxton, whose fame thy milk-warm waters tell,
Whom I, perhaps, no more shall see, farewell!'

"The tepid springs of Buxton issue out of the black lime-stone, either through fissures of the black lime-stone upon the surface, or from the rubble that covers some part of the stratum."

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mountain, which is broken into huge masses of fractured stone, and frowned in such horrible majesty over our heads, is called *The Winnets.* It is *one thousand* feet in perpendicular height from the level of the adjacent plain. When we reached the foot of this mountain the carriage was stopped by two or three rough-looking men, who solicited us to be conducted by them through Speedwell-mine. We rejected the offer; but, I understand, this cavern is another of the wonders of Derbyshire: it is in a subterraneous rock, through which issues a stream of water, and a boat ferries the curious adventurer along these Stygian shores by torch-light. This cavern belongs to a company of miners, and the passage was cut into the rock by the Staffordshire company to drain all the lead-mines in the county of their

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water; but they failed in the speculation.

About a mile from Buxton is another subterraneous cavern, called Pool's Hole, which I regret we did not see, as it contains some very curious petrifactions.

The small town of Castleton* is situated at the foot of three bold precipices, and is resorted to by travellers for the purpose of exploring the gloomy horrors of High Peak, into which we are to be conducted to-morrow, and whence, if I return in safety, your ladyship shall be informed of my adventures; in the mean time I will most respectfully say adieu!

* That the lead mines of Derbyshire were known to the Saxons is apparent from the mine near Castleton, called *Odin*, from the name of one of their deities; the same circumstance proves that it was opened prior to the introduction of Christianity.

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LETTER XIII.

Matlock, Sept. 24.

HAVING in truth visited the regions of *Pandæmonium*, I will give your ladyship, according to promise, an account of the wonders I beheld whilst removed from the habitable world.

"Deep, deep, a cavern lies, devoid of light,
All rough with rocks, and horrible to sight;
Its dreadful mouth is fenced with sable floods,
And the brown horrors of surrounding woods.
From its black jaws such baleful vapours rise,
Blot the bright day, and blast the golden skies;
That not a bird can stretch her pinions there,
Through the thick poisons of encumber'd air."

Pitt's Virgil.

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Our guide conducted my friends and me by a winding path overhung with rocks, at whose base a rivulet precipitated itself into some adjoining mills, to the mouth of the cave, where we entered this subterraneous dwelling (such it really is), having cottages dispersed up and down containing men, women, and children, busily employed in rope-making, some of them singing merrily in this gloomy abode, for the only light afforded was what issued from the mouth of the cavern. The immense height of the front of this awful arch-way is fifty-two yards in perpendicular rock, and the breadth of the cave within thirty-nine yards, though its dimensions are scarcely visible to the eye. Proceeding with our guide to a spot where every ray of light was now excluded, we were each presented with a can-

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dle, and ordered cautiously to follow our conductor, who led us where

"Low brow'd rocks hung nodding o'er the deep:"

for it was only by stooping low that it was possible to advance into this scene of horror.

The first pause we made was to be shewn the *bell house*, so called from the rock taking a high and circular form; and again proceeding over rude stones fixed in the most irregular directions, environed by darkness impenetrable, we came to a river, which we were informed we must cross, and a boat, with straw spread over its bottom, awaited us to be ferried over. I confess my sensations were not very pleasant, as I was encompassed by black and frowning arches hanging almost to the verge of

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the water, and going I knew not whither. A few minutes, however, landed me on the opposite side of these gloomy regions, where Pluto seemed to hold his court, and whom I expected to have found seated on his infernal throne, surrounded by a legion of his fiends of darkness. Imagine therefore, madam, my surprise in beholding numbers of glittering stars (such the lights appeared) magically illuminating the vaulted concave of his dismal dwelling.

The singularity of our situation brought to my mind some scene in romance in which we were the actors, as I cast my eyes around and surveyed my companions, each clad in white garments, stepping solemnly along, bearing torches in their hands, and shut out in these caverns from all the world, conducted by the gigantic figure of a man with immense boots,

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slouch hat, and tattered coat, followed by Mr. J—— and his servant, both rather tall, wrapped in surtouts.

Advancing still further along these Stygian shores over huge misshapen stones where we could scarcely walk, they were so slippery, and stepping as often into the water as upon them, and almost wet through from incessant heavy drops* that poured from the black and lowering rocks which encompassed us, where no ray of light could penetrate. Before we were suffered to depart we were saluted by a chorus of voices which had nothing of the syren in their strains, and when the persons from whom they pro-

* This dark and projecting pile of rock, distinguished by the name of *Roger Rain's House*, is justly named for the incessant drops of water falling; and it is here the *Genius of Rain* is supposed to have made his dwelling.—*Beauties of England and Wales.*

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ceeded made their appearance, they might have been mistaken for the witches in Macbeth.

At length,

"A ray of welcome light disclos'd our path,
Joyful we left the shadowy realms of death,
And hail'd the opening glories of the sky."
Dante's Inferno.

To reach the extent we had to cross two more rivers. Beyond the second there are some beautiful petrifactions spangling the arch, which is twenty feet high. After passing the third river we came to what is called the devil's church and steeple of such prodigious height that no roof is visible.

The length of this extraordinary cave is seven hundred and fifty yards.

This small town is very insignificant and poor in its appearance, and contains one tolerably good inn. The surrounding country is entirely moun-

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tainous, and contains lead, antimony, and zinc. It is here that the mineralogist and naturalist have ample scope to indulge their taste in examining the sparkling beauty of the petrifactions, formed into a variety of shapes to invite the visitors to become purchasers. A tedious description of the mineralogical curiosities would be uninteresting to your ladyship. Not far from hence is Mam Tor, or the Shivering Mountain, so called from the loose fragments which the rain and frost perpetually bring down*.

* "Mam Tor is distinguished by an abrupt precipice of brown stone, with a large area inclosed with a double trench running up to the edge of it. Here is a rich lead mine, which, though it has been worked much longer than any other which is known, still abounds with ore, and finds employment for about one hundred people. Mam Tor is said to be one thousand feet above

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Adjoining to Castleton, "on Mamsor hill, stand the ruins of an old castle upon the top of the hill, formerly belonging to the Peverells, called *The Castle on the Peak*. (Peak, called Peaclonas, in Saxon, at this day signifies an eminence.) Below this said castle is a den or cave under ground."

This den or cave is the one which I have attempted to describe. We have now the prospect of a more lively scene, being on the wing for Chatsworth.

Castleton valley; in its bowels is the oldest mine worked in High Peak, called Odin, or Oden, perhaps Woden, from the great Saxon chief or deity. The fore or east part of this precipice is a frightful torr. On the top and sides of this hill is a camp supposed to be Roman. The summit of the hill is not level, but runs in a ridge from west to east, along which is built a stone-wall as a pasture-fence, now dividing the camp in two parts."—*Camden*.

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LETTER XIII.

Matlock, Sept. 24.

From Castleton we had a lovely drive to Stoney Middleton, which lies in the beautiful dale of Middleton. The craggy steeps which, for more than a mile before we approached the town, spread to the left into a thousand wild forms, wore the aspect of some extraordinary concussion of nature having transposed them into such a variety of grotesque shapes, sometimes assuming the appearance of ruinous castles, dilapidated fortifications, antique buttresses *, all

* Some of these appeared like the basaltic columns of the Giants' Causeway, or the cave of Icolm Kiln.

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thrown into desolated heaps, so singular are they in their aspect.

At Middleton, which is environed in smoke from the numerous lime-kilns, we paused to regale with some refreshment, and then made the best of our way to Edensor inn, close upon Chatsworth, which, resting in the valley, discloses itself magnificently from amidst the woods and hills which encircle it, with the majestic Derwent rolling in all its sparkling beauty at its feet.

Having since the commencement of my tour from London seen Blenheim, Sherborne, and Warwick castle, I was the less surprised at the grandeur of Chatsworth, which does not lose on a comparison with the former places.

From the inn to the park we had a disagreeable walk through high grass and a drizzling rain. The ap-

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proach to the mansion is by a handsome stone bridge thrown over the Derwent. From the porter's lodge we were conducted through a large court to an anti-room, and thence through a second court of a quadrangular form, round which the mansion is built, proudly supported by stately columns of the Ionic order. The ceiling of the hall is painted by Varrio. The carved work in the chapel is of cedar, and the painting extending along the whole of the right wing is a representation of the miracles of our Saviour. The gallery is exceedingly beautiful; and those who are conversant with Gaurini's beautiful Pastor Fido must be highly interested in the paintings taken from his poem.

It is impossible to enumerate the various suites of apartments we went through. We were shewn the chairs their majesties sat in at the corona-

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tion; the bed King George the Second died in; besides three apartments occupied by Mary, Queen of Scots, during her confinement at Chatsworth palace, a period of thirteen years.

The pleasure-grounds have the appearance of being very lively, and in the highest state of elegant adornment; but the day proved so wet we saw every object to disadvantage. The water-works, and the grand cascade, are exceedingly interesting*.

* The following description is so accurate, I prefer giving it in the words of an elegant modern writer.

"The principal of these artificial contrivances is the great cascade, which consists of a series of steps, or stages, extending a considerable distance down a steep hill, crowned at the top by a temple, which is supplied with water from a reservoir, which occupies several acres.

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After dining at Edensor inn we proceeded to Matlock. From this place the captive queen wrote her second letter to Pope Pius, bearing date October 31, 1570.

When the cascade is put in motion, the water rushes in vast quantities, and with prodigious force, from the domed roof of the temple, and from a variety of lions' heads, dolphins, sea-nymphs, and other figures that ornament it; and falling into a bason in front of the building (from which also several fountains issue), is thence discharged down the flight of steps before described; and having reached the bottom, disappears by sinking into the earth. Among the other contrivances of this kind is a copper tree, made to represent a decayed willow, the branches of which produce an artificial shower; some sea-horses, and a triton, from whose heads small streams issue; and a fountain which throws up the water to the height of ninety feet."

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LETTER XIV.

Matlock, Sept. 25.

On opening my window this morning what a sublime landscape burst upon my view! The sun shone with splendour on the opposite rocks luxuriantly wooded, and

> " Impatient Derwent foams, among the crags
> Roaring impetuous, till his force all lost,
> Gentle and still, a deep and silent stream,
> He scarcely seems to move; o'er him the boughs
> Bend their green foliage, shivering with the wind,
> And dip into his surface,"

in murmuring cadence through the vale beneath. On a verdant lawn

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spread before the hotel, bordered by a gravel walk, the company had formed themselves into groups, and were taking their morning promenade; and every thing wore a most gay and pleasing aspect. I was immediately susceptible of the change of climate. Here the air is so soft, that once again I seemed to inhale the gentle breath of summer, ever most genial to my feelings. The grand and romantic cliffs spreading into wild forms, and beautifully fringed with trees, whose pendant foliage sweeps along their base, coloured by the rich hand of autumn in all its burnished and glowing tints, presented a scene calculated to awaken in the dullest mind enthusiastic admiration, and teach me to exclaim, in the words of Milton,

"———These are thy glorious works,
Parent of good!"

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The woods, the rocks, though majestically bold, are wholly divested of terrific gloom; and the eye, instead of fearfully retiring from their gaze, delights to repose on objects so enchanting.

The hotel we are at has an air of comfort as well as fashion. The public rooms where the company resort to breakfast, dine, and sup, are at the moderate rate of five and sixpence a head. The bed-chambers are from five to seven shillings a week. The other hotel is called the Old Bath; the terms are the same. There are also some private lodging-houses. The baths are annexed to each hotel.

Matlock is just gay enough for sober people, but not gay enough for the dissipated and idle. The situation is highly picturesque; handsome white houses, though few in number, are agreeably scattered along

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the valley, enveloped on all sides by bold precipices, through which are cool, retired, and shady walks on the woody borders of the river.

"These are the haunts of meditation; these
The scenes where ancient bards th' inspiring breath
Extatic felt; and from the world retir'd."

Thomson.

The approach to Matlock (for we quitted by the road we entered the former evening) is most lovely along the winding waters of the Derwent, overhung by various coloured cliffs, whose shapeless and grotesque forms, peeping from beneath the rich foliage which partly clothes them, often sparkle like crystal gems in the sunbeams; and I was astonished at the variety and beauty of the variegated pieces which pave the pathway, and almost made me fancy I was walking

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on diamonds, so bright was their lustre*.

Seldom have I left any place with more regret than Matlock, bounded on all sides by a prospect never to be forgotten; and I cannot help applying to this spot what Mr. Bowles says of Monmouth.

"Oh, Matlock! thine are nature's choicest pictures!

* Calamine, galena, spar and blende contribute to amuse the traveller by their *chatoyant* appearance; but we found some specimens of zeolite so similar to the hydrargilite of Professor Davy, that, were it not for its situation, we should have supposed it to be the latter.

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LETTER XV.

Chapel in le Frith, Sept. 27.

A FEW miles beyond Matlock the barren hills of Derbyshire again rose to view, though now considerably enlivened by partial woodlands and villages scattered along the plains.

We dined at Bakewell, a respectable old town. The church, standing on a gentle eminence, has a handsome steeple: the inside is of considerable antiquity, and some of its architecture of the Saxon order. It contains two or three magnificent old monuments of the Vernon family, and in the east chancel is a small tomb of alabaster of infinite beauty.

Near the town are several stone

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quarries, and mines of lead and zinc.

About two miles from Bakewell an antique mansion seated on a bold eminence* attracted my notice, from the ruinous desolation that surrounded it. High turrets, rude battlements, raised in gloomy pomp above the woods which half concealed it; and we longed to explore the vast solitude of this deserted place.

We slept at this wretched place last night; I hope your ladyship will never in your travels encounter such poor and comfortless accommodation.

We are just returned from seeing a curious specimen of art, called an inclined plane, for conveying limestones from the top of a steep hill

* This eminence is a single mass of limestone, insulated by strata of a different kind.

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down to the valley beneath, in small iron waggons without horses, containing two tons each, which run on an iron rail-way, and are set in motion by a machine from the top of the hill; and seven loaded waggons descend while seven empty ascend. This ingenious piece of mechanism is not less amusing than interesting. We are now on our return to Stand-hall after a most agreeable excursion of above two hundred miles.

Stand-hall, Sept. 30.

Haddon-hall, an ancient mansion I described to your ladyship, exclusive of its being one of the finest specimens of antiquity this country produces, is the place Mrs. Radcliffe has made the subject of her pen in describing the Castle of Udolpho. This circumstance alone would render it highly interesting to the admirers

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of her writings, and worthy of particular description *.

* Should these letters meet with sufficient approbation, it is the author's intention to illustrate them with a sketch of Haddon-hall, and five other additional views. Of this now mouldering edifice Camden gives the following account:

"Haddon Grange is a venerable seat of the Duke of Rutland, one of the most curious and perfect of our old castellated mansions. The house stands on a gentle hill in the midst of thick woods overhanging the Wye, which winds along the valley at a great depth beneath. The house consists of two courts: the first is entered by an arched gateway in a corner. In the centre building, between the two courts, is the great hall, with its butteries and cellars. At the other end of the hall is the drawing-room, and in a corner of the hall a staircase formed of large blocks of stone leading to the gallery, 110 feet by 17, the floor of which is said to be laid with boards cut out of one oak which grew in the park. In one of the windows are the arms of England in the garter surmounted with a crown. In the great east window, and others on each side of it, are

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To return to Mrs. Radcliffe. The reader will, no doubt, regret with me

some good remains of painted glass. At the right angles, within the gallery, are three smaller apartments. All these rooms are still hung with arras, which conceals their clumsy doors. At the other side of the drawing-room were two or three other apartments handsomely fitted up, and joining it to the chapel, which has a low antichapel, a nave, two aisles, and a font. The rest of the house is taken up with a number of small rooms above and below for servants and retainers. The rooms (except the gallery) are dark and uncomfortable, and give no idea of our ancestors' taste, or domestic pleasures; yet was this place for ages the seat of magnificence and hospitality. Sir George Vernon, Knight, who lived in the last age, save one, by his magnificence and hospitality gained the name of the *King of the Peak* amongst the vulgar. It was at length quitted by its owners, the Dukes of Rutland, for Belvoir castle in Lincolnshire. The ancient garden is but small, consisting of parallel terraces placed one above another, each having a sort of stone balustrade. The great park was ploughed up about twelve years ago."

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that a lady whose original genius and wonderful imagination have insured her immortal fame, should have been obliged to retire into a remote part of Derbyshire under the most direful influence of deep-rooted and incurable melancholy. Her husband is a man of science and of letters, and at this period is concerned, I understand, in some of the literary publications of the day.

In the grounds was dug up an altar of rough stone such as the house was built of.

"In the time of the first Duke of Rutland (so created by Queen Anne) seven score servants were maintained here, and the house was kept open in the true style of old English hospitality during twelve days after Christmas. The last time its festive board was spread was shortly after the conclusion of the late peace, when nearly two hundred couple dined in the long gallery."—*Brayley's Derbyshire.*

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LETTER XVI.

Stand-hall, October 12.

During the period I have been the guest of my agreeable friends, I must not omit informing your ladyship of the visits I have paid to Bury and Rochdale, towns not far distant from this place, and where I experienced much civility. Accompanied by Mr. J—— and his sisters, we spent two agreeable days at the Orchards', in Rochdale. The church, from being placed on very elevated ground, is a conspicuous and good object. At the foot of Blackstone Edge, a mountain which rears its gloomy and snow-topped head in frowning ma-

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jesty a short distance from the town, is the boundary of Yorkshire.

The country would look desolate (for it is very cold) were not the dale cheerfully diversified by the handsome mansions and tasteful pleasure-grounds of the numerous families resident in the environs of Rochdale, whose wealth appears as unbounded as the magnificence of their tables, and the luxury of the entertainments I partook of astonished me.

Much spirit of sociality prevails in the neighbourhood. The inhabitants assemble almost every day in the week at each others' houses alternately, where they form large card parties, which begin before six o'clock in the evening. Indeed at their dinner meetings, when the ladies retire to the drawing-room, the card tables are immediately set out.

It is to be regretted that an en-

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tire cessation should be put to that lively and rational conversation expected in a society above the ordinary circles of life. I remember once having been on a visit at a town in the west of England, where playing cards was carried to so great a height that any person who was invited and did not join in the game, was called "*Live lumber.*" There are times when this recreation, in certain societies, may be necessary to fill up the evening, and conversation would only excite *ennui* in the company met together; but, surely, young women might find (as in the metropolis of London) other modes of filling their vacant hours than in consigning them to such a dangerous amusement. I have observed that they are too often initiated into it from perfect childhood, and must agree with the just remark of an author, who says, "The early

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amusements of women are the circumstances that form their dispositions and characters, what can be expected from the confinement, the agitations of a card table? How different the effect of contemplating nature in her most exquisite and useful form. It improves the heart as well as the taste".

I was surprised to find the primitive hours of our ancestors (even in this age of reversing the systems of nature) still prevalent at Rochdale, one o'clock being the general hour of dining, gala days excepted. Curiosity prompted me to enquire how it happened they were so far behind in the modes of the present day. These early hours, it seems, are better suited to the convenience of the gentlemen, most of whom are engaged in large mercantile concerns.

In every corner of the globe we

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naturally imbibe a taste for the manners of our own country, the habits of which we become so insensibly wedded to, as to consider them as forming a part of our existence. Consequently, the late hours of the inhabitants of the metropolis would as ill accord with a country life, as a country life would accord with the taste of one born and bred in the capital.

In our way to Rochdale we passed through a miserable village, called Whitworth, which was pointed out to me as a place celebrated for being the residence of some men denominated the "*Whitworth Doctors.*" Mr. J—— gave me the following singular account of them.

"*Old Sammie in Whitworth*" was originally a common farrier, or cow doctor. His sons however, John, and George, though they continued the business of farriers, had a deal to do

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with the human race, and for many years were famous for the cure of cancers, and contracted or broken limbs, which they frequently effected at a very small expence, from the sum of two and sixpence to half a guinea. T——, Bishop of Durham, was a patient of theirs for a cancerous complaint; and it is well known that they prolonged his life for several months, though they did not cure him.

To this obscure village both lords and commoners resort for relief; and in cancerous cases and contractions have undoubtedly succeeded when the regular bred men of the faculty have failed. The widow of George, son of old Sammie, and James, grandson of Sammie, are the present doctors, and are held in high estimation for the same cures. The widow of Doctor George is reckoned very clever, and

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takes a most active part amongst the patients of both sexes. They attend once a week at Rochdale, where they have a public open shop, and it is wonderful, though dreadful, to see the business they go through."

Adjoining to the mansion of Standhall is a barn, which was once a chapel. It has a fine Gothic roof of English oak, and it is a singular fact, no one ever saw a spider's web upon it; and it always looks as if it had just been swept down. Mr. J—— informed me, no person he had ever met with could account for it, although all other barns are covered with spiders webs.

The period of my return home is so fast approaching, that, for the present, I must close my correspondence with your ladyship. Next summer it is my purpose to add a *Third Excursion*, in once more visit-

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ing Wales, if no incident prevents me. In the mean time, therefore, allow me, madam, the honour of subscribing myself, with the most perfect respect,

Your ladyship's
obliged and devoted
humble servant,
E. I. SPENCE.

END OF VOL. I.

T. DAVISON, Whitefriars, London.

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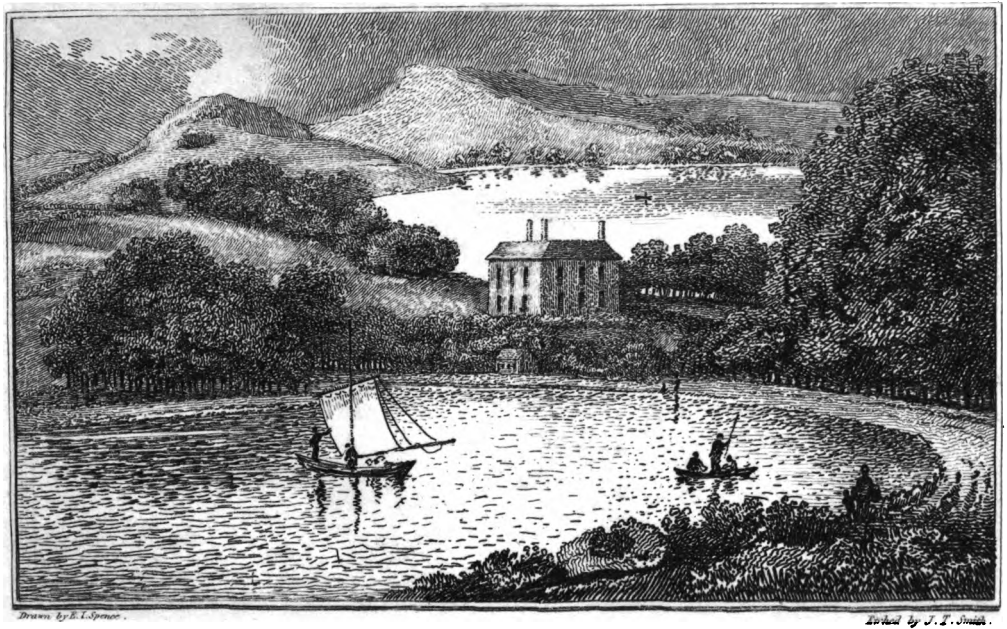
Frontispiece to Vol 2.



Drawn by E. I. Spence. *Etched by J. T. Smith.*

Britton Ferry.

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SUMMER EXCURSIONS

THROUGH PARTS OF

OXFORDSHIRE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, WARWICKSHIRE, STAFFORDSHIRE, HEREFORDSHIRE, DERBYSHIRE, AND SOUTH WALES.

BY E. I. SPENCE,

AUTHOR OF "THE NOBILITY OF THE HEART," AND "THE WEDDING-DAY."

———Oh, what a sweep
Of landscape lies beneath me! Hills on hills;
——————— and below
Lies the fair glen, whose broken waters flow,
Making such pleasant murmurs as delight
The lingering traveller's ear—thus on my road
How sweet it is to rest me, and survey
The goodly prospect of my journey'd way,
And think of all the pleasures it bestowed.

Southey.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1809.

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T. DAVISON, Whitefriars, London.

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THIRD EXCURSION.

LETTER I.

TO THE COUNTESS OF WINTERTON.

Worcester, August 22, 1808.

ANOTHER winter has passed over since I took leave of your ladyship as a correspondent; and it is once more permitted me to have the honour of continuing my observations to you during this *summer excursion*. For some weeks I have been eager to undertake it, having spent a long and melancholy winter, the consequence of ill health; which not merely weans the taste and spirits from every enjoyment in life, but renders every thing in it worthless and

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uninteresting, while this first of blessings is withheld.

Being informed that the air of Malvern was particularly salubrious, and its scenery lovely, it determined me to bend my course to a part of England which I had never seen; and the wish to pursue my plan without any interruption from company induced me to set out with only a servant, that I might travel from place to place as fancy prompted, or interesting objects required; for I have observed when a few persons form what is called *a party of pleasure*, the inclinations of the party so often disagree, that disappointment corrodes the mind, and the tour, instead of being productive of pleasure and useful information, is too often ended in disgust.

Having last year travelled over the same ground to Oxford, I have no new remarks to offer. On entering a part

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of Gloucestershire, Bourton on the Hill attracted my notice; a rude antique village (though once I understand a large place), seated on a declivity, and prettily embellished and shaded by trees. It commands an extensive prospect, and at no great distance are to be seen the vestiges of a Roman encampment.

Proceeding a few miles further, the celebrated vale of Evesham opened upon us with considerable beauty. All its fertile meads and soft picturesque scenery, spreading for miles into such a succession of rich land, as to form almost a perpetual garden. The towns of Evesham and Bengeworth are separated by an old bridge, and the river Avon is navigable as far as Tewksbury. The church of Evesham, resting on the brow of the hill, with an elegant ruin, and a noble and detached tower gateway, are interesting objects from the opposite side of the river; nor are they

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unworthy the subject of the artist's pencil. According to ancient record, this place was famous for its stately monastery. The chief remains of the abbey is the grand elliptical arch, which is divided by three sets of mouldings, filled with carved figures in the niches, now considerably mutilated. In this place was fought the battle between Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, who was slain by Prince Edward, afterwards King Edward the First. The inclosures of this fertile vale bespeak the most happy abundance; and may almost be styled the *huerta* of England.

Pershore is a good town, and one of its churches of Saxon architecture is handsome. *Pershor*, Camden tells us, derives its name "from the *pears*," which grow in abundance in the country.

Worcester is a magnificent city, beautifully situated on the Severn, backed

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by the Malvern hills, the stupendous summits of which stretching far northwards, add considerable grandeur to the appearance of the city. The streets are spacious, regular, and clean; and its numerous handsome shops give it an air of much opulence and cheerfulness. Worcester is so ancient, Mr. Valentine Green, the antiquary, asserts, as to owe its rise either to the Romans or Saxons. "About 584," he says in his History of Worcester, "the kingdom of Mercia was founded, which soon reduced the British settlements on the east of the Severn, and that this might be built and fortified by the Mercian princes." Mr. Green further adds, "The name given to this town by the Saxons, *Weogarna Ceaster*, implies that they had founded a Roman camp in this place;" but Camden seems of opinion that the Romans had little connection with it.

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There is a handsome stone bridge at the end of Broad-street, thrown over the Severn, and not far beyond it, to the right, is a large meadow called *Pitchcroft*, where the famous battle of Worcester was fought in the year 1651 between Charles the Second and Cromwell, when the former was defeated, and while two thousand perished by the sword in this memorable battle, four times the number were afterwards sold as slaves to the American planters.

There are various pretty walks in the environs of this city, and the Abberley hills seen to the west, bounded by rich meadows partially wooded, render the landscape very pleasing. A Saxon gateway, over which there is a tower, is called Edgar's, "because the statues of that king and of Elfeda and Elfrida are placed on the eastern front*." The

* Green.

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turrets of this ancient structure are inhabited by a family. The exterior of the cathedral is not so venerable as that of Lichfield, though it is certainly a magnificent edifice; and within, the style of architecture is almost too light to excite that solemnity which generally arises in the mind in walking through cathedrals. St. Wulstan built the greatest part of it; and it is related of him*, "That seeing the workmen employed in pulling down the old church, he wept. One of his attendants expostulated with him, that he ought rather to rejoice that he was preparing in the room of it an edifice of greater splendour, and more proportioned to the enlarged number of monks." He replied, "I think far otherwise, we poor wretches destroy the works of our forefathers only to get praise ourselves; that happy age of holy men knew not

* Duncombe.

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how to build stately churches, but under any roof they offered up themselves living temples unto God, and by their example excited those under their care to do the same. But we, on the contrary, neglecting the care of our souls, labour to heap up stones."

One thousand two hundred and one years after the death of St. Wulstan, his remains had the reputation of working miracles, and fifteen or sixteen persons in a day were said to be cured of their diseases. There is an hospital called St. Wulstan, of which he was the founder, and also one in the north suburb dedicated to St. Oswald. Bishop Wulstan was canonised by Pope Innocent the Third. The ancient graves of St. Oswald and St. Wulstan on each side that of King John, are denoted by the effigies of two bishops lying at equal distances from the great altar. The verger informed me, a very few years

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ago he saw the coffin of King John opened, when the body was discovered to be so entire, that the hair remained on the head, and the teeth were almost complete.

Prince Arthur's chapel, which contains his mausoleum, is considered unique for the ingenuity of its beautiful carved workmanship, which is embellished with a variety of symbols and devices. The altar is wholly divested of ornament, which gives it an impoverished look; neither has it a single painting. The window contains some painted glass, very inferior to what I have seen in other cathedrals.

Some agreeable acquaintances I have formed now solicit my company, therefore a further account of Worcester shall be the subject of another letter.

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LETTER II.

Worcester, June 23.

THERE are several fine monuments in the aisle of the cathedral, one to the memory of Bishop Hough, by the sculptor Roubilliac. He is in a reclined posture, and underneath he is represented standing before the high court of judicature which ejected him from the government of Magdalen college, Oxford. On one side of him is an elegant figure of Religion, so finely executed, as to exhibit much heavenly complacency, and the drapery is so delicately sculptured, as to be almost transparent. Opposite to Religion a naked boy personating Love is weeping the separation of a tender pair, his right hand supporting a profile of the bishop's lady. Besides this dis-

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tinguished monument here is an elegant tablet, by Bacon, erected by Mrs. Solly to the memory of her husband. This lady is represented bending in a disconsolate attitude over the tomb of her husband, holding an infant in her arms, and two children in despondence are standing beside her. The inscription, written by herself, is a flowery panegyric, expressive of the anguish of her mind at her irreparable loss. When Mrs. Solly erected this monument, she requested the dean's permission to be locked into the cathedral once a year, to mourn over his relics. But as it is only

"——— The grief that does not speak,
"Whispers the o'er fraught heart, and bids it break;"

so this lady shortly afterwards consoled herself, by taking to her arms another husband.

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There are several other monuments worthy of observation.

The vast arcades spread along the nave of this cathedral, amid which I walked to hear the effect of the organ, as its deep and solemn tones swelled with the sublime chaunt of the responses, recalled the following lines of Milton's beautiful Il Penseroso.

> "But let my due feet never fail
> To walk the studious cloisters pale;
> And love the high embossed roof,
> With antique pillars, massy proof.
> And stained window richly dight,
> Casting a dim religious light.
> There let the pealing organ blow
> To the full voiced quire below;
> In service high, and anthems clear,
> As may with sweetness, through mine ear
> Dissolve me into extasies,
> And bring all heav'n before mine eyes."

And my mind became impressed with the idea of the majestic and gloomy sanctuaries in other countries, where the

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pomp of religious worship excites the mind to the liveliest enthusiasm. I certainly think there is a solemnity in our cathedral service, which though at times bordering on the ceremonies of papal worship, yet tends to arrest the attention more deeply than the simple and dry performance of our churches, except, indeed, when some fashionable preachers excite the admiration of a few of our fashionable ladies with their very pretty *moral essays*. The duty is performed in a very solemn and impressive manner.

The chapter-house, containing the library, is a decagon, with a noble central pillar. The ancient library is supposed to have been in one of the rooms over the south aisle of the body of the church. I had the curiosity to explore with my friends not merely this apartment, where we found some old books moth-

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eaten and defaced, but a whole suite of rooms which were once, most probably, the habitations of monks. These rooms are situated above the higher tier of arches in the cathedral, and the ascent to them proved rather an arduous undertaking. The house my friends occupy is one of the prebendal mansions, and has some of the relics of what was formerly the monastery annexed to it. From the apparent vestiges of fire-places and ovens at the base of the high and dilapidated walls, I presume this part must have been the kitchen of the monastery.

Here is an hospital called St. Wulstan, of which he was the founder; also another in the north suburb, dedicated to St. Oswald. The refectory is now the college-hall. Here was likewise a nunnery, which still retains the name of the "White Ladies," so called from

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the habit they wore. The remaining part of the building is now a commodious dwelling-house.

This city contains not fewer than eleven parish churches, and a very noble town-hall. The infirmary is so handsome a building, situated in a large garden, as to give it the appearance of a gentleman's mansion. But I am sorry to observe, the police is so badly administered that the streets are noisy and riotous at nights; and, what is very surprising, the city is neither lighted nor watched. The water (one of the most healthful commodities of life) is extremely muddy and bad.

The great beauty of the Worcester china is too universally known to render it necessary for me to notice. Here is also a large manufactory of gloves.

The market is abundantly supplied with all sorts of provision, and is one of the best in the kingdom.

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Having spent a week pleasantly at Worcester, I am on the eve of departing for Malvern, where I hope to inhale some of those healthful breezes, which, alas! I have not found in this alluring city.

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LETTER III.

Great Malvern, July 1.

MALVERN has so long been eminent for the resort of valetudinarians, as well as of the gay, and is so well known, as scarcely to leave room for description; yet, as I once before observed to your ladyship, the same objects impress so differently different persons, that I am tempted to offer some remarks on this place, which, I hope, will not prove wholly uninteresting.

There is no regular conveyance between Worcester and Malvern, and the people are by no means intelligent or accommodating.

A happy chance conducted me to one of the sweetest spots in this picturesque village, where in a perfect cottage, with

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my sitting-room opening into a hanging orchard, and perfumed with the fragrant scent of various flowers, I am presented with a most extensive and enchanting view. The Malvern hills shelter me from the east winds, as my abode is situated on their declivity.

Great Malvern, as this place is called, does not contain above fifty houses, but as they are of more than ordinary good appearance, and some few wearing even a degree of elegance, from being inhabited by persons of condition, the village, though perfectly retired, is cheerful and genteel. The first *coup d'œil* is perfectly enchanting, and would have recalled the romantic scenes of Matlock, had it been enlivened by the beauties of a meandering river, or a spacious lake to diversify the landscape.

In spring I am told the white blossoms of the trees are particularly beautiful, and from the encircling orchards,

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the boughs of which are laden with fruit, I should suppose Pomona had here fixed her most favourite residence.

There are walks cut through these mountainous elevations, which consist of various strata, and the western declivity is composed of limestone, in which many fossils are found. Some parts of the hills are clothed with fern, others with short sweet herbage and wild thyme, on which the numerous flocks of sheep brouse. Some rare plants are also found, but the *digitalis purpurea*, which hangs in graceful profusion its purple bells, particularly attracts the attention. When I reached the highest point of these hills, it was awful to look down; and as my eye wandered over the immensity of space, the view embraced the towering mountains in Wales, proudly o'ertopping every other scene in nature; while in distant prospect

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appeared the counties of Monmouth, Hereford, Radnor, Brecknock, Salop, Worcester, Gloucester, Stafford, Warwick, and three cathedrals; with several market towns, all spread as in a map before me. I feel it impossible to give you any idea of the sublimity of the prospect. It is only in scenes like these, where the ceremony a town life imposes can best be thrown aside; and where the mind becomes sensibly alive to the beautiful recreation of wandering unrestrained over these "health breathing hills;" a delight which a modern fine lady would probably smile at the idea of enjoying. To your ladyship, however, I may safely make this observation, for *you* possess a *rational* mind; and, in former happy days, I have seen you in the beautiful retreats of Shillinglee Park, hanging on the arm of your amiable lord, tenderness and sweetness illuminat-

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ing your countenance, whilst in various ways you were partaking of those innocent and rural pleasures with which it abounded.

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LETTER IV.

Great Malvern, July 5.

MALVERN is a place of considerable antiquity. Before the conquest it was a wilderness, and so thickly wooded, that the monks retired from the priory at Worcester, and became hermits in this rude spot, where their religious worship was carried on. "Enthusiasm spread so rapidly," (says the writer of a short account of Malvern) "they formed into a society, and agreed according to the order of St. Benedict, and elected Alwin, one of their company, to be their superior. Thus was this monastery founded in the year 1083, by consent of St. Wulstan, bishop of Worcester." The priory church, according to Camden, "was bought by

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the parish at the dissolution, and, except the lady chapel at the east end, and one on the north side, is entire, with beautiful painted windows, miserably defaced." There are, however, sufficient variety of the paintings still remaining on the windows to render them very curious, and what fills the compartments are chiefly taken from scriptural pieces. In the south aisle are two large windows, with a variety of devices; some historical, representing the figures of King Henry the Seventh, Elizabeth his queen, and Arthur Prince of Wales.

The church gives an idea of its former magnificence. The ascent to the altar is by broad steps, of very curious tesselated pavement, and there are some singular Roman stones in the chancel, with inscriptions, which are almost obliterated. The arcades are of the most ancient Norman order, though the style of

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architecture is rather airy, considering the antiquity of the church. A curious range of stalls attracted my notice, containing benches which lift up, with most grotesque and absurd devices upon them. These stalls were appropriated for the monks, during the performance of their religious ceremonies. In one part of the church is a confessional, with a sort of cell, constituting also a chapel for the penitent.

I would wish strangers who visit it should guard against the excessive damp and chill air which prevail; the pavement in many parts is covered with green mould, although divine service is regularly performed in it.

The waters of Malvernare particularly recommended by the late Dr. Wall of Worcester, for their extreme purity: he says, "They are not apt to heat the blood or affect the head so much as

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most waters of the kind usually do." No fountain can be more entirely crystalline.

O liquidi cristalli arde s'estingua
L'ardente sete a miseri mortale!
Ma piace salubre e, se stra vive pietre
Rompendo l'argentate ed fredde cara
Incontra nuovo sol, che il puro argento
Co'raggi indura.

Tasso.

In scrofulous cases, I have heard of these waters being particularly salutary, and having effected some extraordinary and happy cures, by patiently persevering a long time in their use. What are their effects in consumptive habits I am ignorant; but I can venture to assert from experience, that the Bristol waters excite a considerable degree of fever, and heighten the pulse to a dangerous degree.

Malvern wells are the resort of fashionable company, and not this tranquil spot,

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from which they are about two miles distant. I went to them yesterday, and expected to have found the situation and amusements interesting; for it is seldom the dissipated and idle give celebrity to any particular place, without those accompaniments to recommend them. My surprise, therefore, was extreme, to find at Malvern wells only one solitary house, situated at the foot of hills, not near so beautiful as those which encircle Great Malvern; and though partially skirted with woods, they are wholly divested of that luxuriant scenery which gives such a peculiar charm to this place. I understand there are neither balls nor concerts, except accidentally, though a harper comes over to amuse the company. A billiard-room is established for the gentlemen; but the want of a public library to lounge away the hours must create sad *ennui* to the ladies, who, if

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they read at all, like to turn over the pages of a novel, which cannot be procured nearer than Great Malvern.

There are several commodious lodging-houses in this village, let at from five to seven guineas a week, which surprised me in such a remote situation.

It is only the lovers of the sober charms of nature, or meditators, who amidst these sequestered scenes can experience delight. To such persons, Great Malvern, from its salubrious air, its rich expanse of landscape, its pensive stillness, will ever possess a thousand charms; and they cannot direct their steps to a spot more consonant to their wishes.

About a mile hence is a small and pretty villa, called Pickham grove, where the Dowager Lady L—— resides: she is the widow of the late Lord L——, whose eccentricities were as notorious as the singular story connected with his death; being impressed with the idea

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of seeing a vision, who foretold at what hour he should die. He was a man of taste and of letters. The elegant little work intitled "The Correspondents" were letters supposed to have passed between him and this lady previous to their marriage, and the beautiful fable of "The Widowed Linnet" to be the offspring of her pen. She is no longer young, but seems healthy and robust. She has established a school in this village, in which she takes a very active and benevolent part.

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LETTER V.

Hereford, July 13.

WERE the expences of Malvern as moderate as might be expected, it would be a most desirable residence; but every thing is extravagantly dear for so retired a spot.

The stage from Malvern to Hereford was actually travelling through the regions of Pomona; every bough was laden with the golden apple, which produces the almost universal beverage of the inhabitants of this county.

The county of Hereford was formerly inhabited by the Silures, and Caractacus, that celebrated hero, says Duncomb in his History of Herefordshire, was chief both

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of the Silures and Ordovices. Having assembled from all parts those who deprecated a peace with Rome, he attempted to oppose with vigour the invaders of his country; and the important battle between Caractacus and Ostorius (which is described in this gentleman's History of Herefordshire) was fought not far from this city, where also is Dynedor camp, sometimes called Oyster-hill, from Ostorius Scapula, the Roman general, who is said to have encamped there during the contest with the brave Caractacus.

The ancient city of Hereford was formerly denominated *Trefawith*, from the beech trees; but Camden says, "The Saxons called it *Fernlege* or *Fern hill*, and the place where the cathedral church is now was sometime a chapel of our lady, called *our lady* chapel of *Fernelege*."

Hereford is but a small city, and is si-

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tuated in a fertile plain, bounded on all sides with orchards, and watered by the translucent Wye.

The style of the cathedral is partly Gothic and partly Saxon. Its architecture has not any thing very striking; and the monuments are few and insignificant, except that of Cantilupe and some other bishops, which are in heavy stone sculpture*. The interior is handsome, and contains an excellent organ; the ascent to the altar by steps gives it an air of grandeur. The library was formerly a

* Duncomb gives the following account. "Thomas Cantilupe died in the year 1282, and was canonized in 1310. The reputed sanctity of this prelate occasioned his tomb to be visited by pilgrims and travellers from all parts of Europe; and it is still regarded with veneration by the Catholics. Cantilupe is said to have been the last Englishman who obtained the honour of canonization; and Matthew of Westminster records, that a hundred and sixty-three miracles were performed at his tomb in a short space."

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chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and its carved work is particularly curious, containing, in a range of compartments, nineteen figures of saints richly painted in gaudy colours. The verger shewed me a manuscript bible of Wickliff's, the first in use, written on vellum in the old black letter, full of abbreviations. He also shewed me some Latin manuscripts, in various parts beautifully illuminated with most ingenious penmanship, the colouring of the figures very bright. In the north transept is a chapel of St. John the Baptist, in which the parish service is performed.

There are three parish churches in Hereford, and in former ages some monasteries, of which there are now no remains. The walks around Hereford are pretty: the one of fashionable resort is called the Castle-green; it consists of two regular gravel walks round a lawn, which is shaded by trees on the border of the

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river. Not the smallest vestige of the castle is remaining; though according to Camden's account, "The Normans built a very large and strong castle on the east side of the cathedral, along the river Wye, which is now ruined by time and fallen to decay. This castle, by the ruins, appeared to have been one of the fairest, largest, and strongest in England. The walls were high and firm, full of great towers, and where the river was not a sufficient defence for it, there it was strongly ditched. It had two wards, each of them surrounded by water: the dungeon was high, and extremely well fortified; having in the outward ward ten towers of a semicircular figure, and one great tower in the inner ward. Some think that Heraldus began this castle after that he had conquered the rebellion of the Welsh, in Edward the Confessor's time. Others think that the Lacies, Earls of Hereford, were the great makers

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of it. Afterwards they walled the city about. In the reign of King Henry the First, the present beautiful church was founded by Bishop Reynelm."

The views around Hereford are very sylvan, and from some points, where the Welsh mountains are discernible, present something of the magnificent.

The infirmary is a handsome building, as is also the asylum for lunatics; each a quarter of a mile distant from the town. The inns are excellent; but I would particularly advise all travellers to go to the City Arms hotel, where they will meet with very good accommodation at a moderate rate, from remarkably civil people.

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LETTER VI.

Hereford, July 15.

Both Thalia and Melpomene have made Hereford the nursery of their choicest favourites. In Widemarsh-street I was shewn the house in which Garrick was born; and though I have heard Lichfield named, it is a mistake, for Hereford was certainly the place of his nativity. The following extract is given from the parish register of All Saints. "David, son of Peter and Arabella Garrick, was baptized February 28, 1716. H. Lewis, minister."

The Rev. Mr. Duncomb, in his history of the antiquities of the county, also informs us, "That Mr. Garrick's father was a French refugee, and had a lieutenant's commission in a regiment of horse,

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stationed in Hereford. His quarters were at the inn called the Angel. David Garrick was born there: his father was afterwards promoted to a troop in the same regiment. But the place of his general residence was Lichfield, and thither young Garrick and his mother removed, so soon as the latter had recovered her health. His education was liberal, though principally intended for mercantile pursuits, and was partly obtained at Lichfield grammar school, and partly received under the tuition of Dr. Johnson; who, at a subsequent period, accompanied his pupil to London in search of the means of existence. A passion for the stage, which he had early imbibed, at length induced him to engage in the theatrical profession; and under the assumed name of Lyddal, he made his first public appearance at the Ipswich theatre, in the summer of 1741, in the character of Aboan, in Oronooko.

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In the December following, he appeared at London, at the theatre in Goodman's-fields, in the character of Richard the Third."

Mrs. Siddons is a native of Hereford, and some of her relations, whom she now and then visits, are resident here. Mrs. Clive and Mr. Powell were likewise natives of this city. In a spot in Pipe-lane, where stood an obscure cottage, the celebrated Nell Gwinn, the favourite of Charles the Second, was born. I take the liberty of inserting in a note an interesting account of her, from Mr. Duncomb's work*.

* "By one of the various transitions which remove individuals of every class from one place to another, Mrs. Gwinn from her humble cottage in Pipe-lane became an inhabitant of the great metropolis, where she entered into the service of one of the orderers who attended the playhouse; this was the character in which she first appeared in the lobby of Drury-lane theatre. Agreeable in her

In Hereford as well as at Worcester, I observed the protuberance in the throat

person, and possessed of much natural humour and vivacity, she soon attracted the notice and affections of the manager, Mr. Hart, and thus gifted, he introduced her on the stage, about the year 1667.

"In this situation she became a great favourite of Dryden's, who gave her the most showy and alluring parts in his comedies, and wrote several prologues and epilogues expressly for her; and of these she became the best speaker of her time. In an epilogue to '*Tyrannic Love*,' she expressed her preference to comedy in these words—

'I die
Out of my calling in a tragedy.'

"The immediate cause of her becoming the object of the King's affection is thus represented. At the Duke's Theatre, under Killegrew's patent, the celebrated Nokes appeared in a hat larger than that usually assigned to Pistol, which diverted the audience so much as to help off a bad play. Dryden, in return, caused a hat to be made of the circumference of a large coach wheel, and made Mrs. Gwinn speak an epilogue under the umbrella of it,

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of many of the women, so prevalent in Derbyshire: some physical cause

with the brim stretched out in its utmost horizontal extension, not unlike a mushroom of that size. No sooner did she appear in this strange dress, than the house was in convulsions of laughter; amongst the rest the King gave the fullest proof of approbation, by going behind the scenes after the play, and taking her home in his coach to sup with him. After this elevation she still continued on the stage, and shewed great powers in exhibiting the airy, sprightly, and fantastic effusions of the comic muse. After this period, A. D. 1670, she was delivered of a son, who was afterwards created Duke of St. Alban's, and her grandson attained the honour of prelacy, and became the proprietor of that episcopal palace which adjoined the humble cot where her maternal ancestors first drew breath. As mistress of the King, Mrs. Gwinn neither betrayed avarice, pride, nor ostentation; she remembered all her theatrical friends, and rendered them services: generously discharging her debt of gratitude to Dryden, and proving a warm patroness to Lee and Otway. She was most munificent in her charities; and the single act of instigating the King to erect Chelsea Hospital, as an asylum for disabled

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must occasion it in these neighbouring counties*.

soldiers, must entitle her memory to no inconsiderable respect. The ground on which it stands is generally admitted to have been given by Nell, as an encouragement to the design.

"Bishop Burnet describes her as the wildest and most indiscreet creature that ever was in a court; but admits she continued in great favour with the King as long as she lived. Her country residence was at Bagnigge Wells, where a bust of her still remains. Her stature was short, her hair inclined to red, her eyes were small and lively, and she possessed what the French term *en bon point*. Her feet were diminutive in size, and as such were the frequent subject of mirth to the merry monarch. In the year 1691 she died in her town-house, and was interred with great solemnity in the church of St. Martin's in the Fields. Dr. Tennison, then vicar of the parish, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, preached her funeral sermon on the occasion, and adduced satisfactory evidence that she died a sincere and contrite christian."

* The *Bronchocele*, or Derby-neck, is an enlargement of the glands of the throat, and is a degree of the same disease that is known in the Alps and other mountainous tracts." *Aikin's Manchester.*

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At Hereford I was introduced by an amiable family who unite with kind hospitality a spirit of universal benevolence, to Mr. Wathen, a gentleman known to almost all our tourists, from his ever friendly and ready services in accompanying and pointing out those objects most worthy their attention; being himself a great pedestrian tourist, and is exceedingly communicative and intelligent.

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LETTER VII.

Hay, July 18.

ABOUT seven miles beyond Hereford the scenery becomes very interesting, and from the hills being luxuriantly clothed, they are beautifully soft in their appearance. I observed during this stage, that most of the corn fields also contained apple trees.

> ——————" there to the sight
> Apples of juice, and plenteous sheaves of corn,
> Oft interlaced occur, and both imbibe
> Fitting congenial juice, so rich the soil.
> So much does fructuous nurture oft abound."
>
> *Philips.*

At Witney Bridge the Wye meanders in all its sparkling lustre through the valley. The small village called

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Clifford, with its ruinous castle seated on a hill, was the birth-place of fair Rosamond.

Since I came hither an extraordinary anecdote was related to me, that at the parish church of Witney the marriage fees amount only to *fourpence*, and a couple who were lately married there paid no more. In the town of Builth, one stage hence, the same gentleman informed me he witnessed a wedding celebrated according to ancient custom, in the following whimsical manner.

The bride made her appearance mounted on horseback behind a friend, who set off with her at full gallop, followed by a troop of horse with men and women, the latter clad in long blue cloaks, who swiftly pursued the bride until she reached the church; when the ceremony was performed, an old woman officiating as the clerk. The company

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on leaving the church withdrew to an alehouse, when after taking some refreshment, they again set off as swiftly as before until they reached home, where the bride retired to some hiding place, in which she remained until the bridegroom found and claimed her.

Never was there a more desolate-looking town than the Hay: the streets, if such they can be called, are so narrow, shapeless, irregular, and full of stones, as to give it the appearance of a besieged place. There are, however, some good shops, and abundance of alehouses, for I verily believe every third one supplies that beverage, without which the Welsh peasantry could not live; but no families of condition (except at the castle) reside here. The actual situation, however, of the Hay is most desirable. The view from the church-yard is truly picturesque; and the Wye, ever new, ever fanciful, in its varied forms, here

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again presents itself in the valley, which is overhung by high banks, covered chiefly with hazles, whence it is supposed this place derives the name of *Treckethle*, or *the town among the hazles.*

The graves in the church-yard are prettily decorated with flowers*. This is

* " The custom of strewing flowers upon the graves of departed friends is derived from a practice of the ancient church; for it was usual in those times for the common sort of people to strew the graves of their friends with various flowers: of these there are two notable instances taken notice of by Cassalion, and several ritualists. The one is that of St. Ambrose in his funeral oration on the death of Valentinian. *I will not sprinkle his grave with flowers, but pour on his spirit the odour of Christ. Let others scatter baskets of flowers. Christ is our lily, with this I will consecrate his relics.*

" The other is of St. Jerome, in his epistle to Pammachius, upon the death of his wife. ' Whilst other husbands strewed violets, and roses, and lilies, and purple flowers, upon the graves of their wives, and comforted themselves with such like

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the first place in Wales where I have met with this tender and elegant testimony of respect to the memory of departed friends.

The strewing the graves with flowers appears not only an ancient christian custom, but even goes as far back as to be one of the funeral rites among the heathens; for Virgil in his sixth Æneid, speaking of Marcellus, says,

" Bring fragrant flowers, the whitest lilies bring,
With all the purple beauties of the spring;
These gifts at least, these honours I'll bestow
On the dear youth, to please his shade below."

Through the interest of a friend I gained admission into the castle, now an old-fashioned mansion, built on the site of what was formerly the castle, a Gothic

offices, Pammachius bedewed her ashes and venerable bones with the balsam of alms.' "

Observations on Popular Antiquities.

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arch being all which remains of it. This gateway is so magnificently clad with ivy, as to be considered (as Captain Wellington informed me when he was doing me the honour of conducting me through his mansion) the most exuberant and beautiful in the kingdom; that at Raglând, however, is not less luxuriant.

This small town formerly belonged to the Duke of Buckingham, and is thought by Mr. Malkin, "to have been of some consequence in the time of the Romans. And at that period the castle was a Roman fortress on the river banks, near the church; the only vestige is a mound, or entrenchment."

I am astonished none of the pedestrian tourists have noticed a hamlet on the borders of Herefordshire, called Cusop, distinguished for scenery more filled with the picturesque than any spot around the Hay. The clergyman who has the living was so obliging as to shew

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me some very beautiful walks in the environs of his parsonage, which, sequestered at the foot of the hills, presents many interesting views. The Dulas, a small river, babbles through a copse on the borders of his garden, which is filled with a concert of birds; and above the range of hills which overhangs the valley the frowning top of the Black Mountain presents itself. In the church-yard are some large and venerable yew trees*.

The walk I took yesterday evening was more beautiful than any spot I ever explored. As one hill receded, another

* "The planting of yew trees in church-yards seems to derive its origin from the ancient funeral rites. The yew from its *perpetual verdure* was used as an emblem of the resurrection; of which also the christian custom of decking the coffin with bay, is a most elegant emblem. It is said that this latter tree when seemingly dead will revive with the root, and its dry leaves assume its wonted verdure."

Observations on Popular Antiquities.

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and another more magnificent arose, richly feathered with wood, whilst through the impervious road of a shady dingle, the silvery river swiftly gliding over broken rocks reflected on its bosom, alone interrupted the profound stillness of the scene; nor did any object appear but those formed by the hand of nature, except a rude and solitary hut peeping through this wild scenery, where a peasant, with his faithful dog at his feet, was eating his supper.

Emerging from the woods, and taking a sheep-path at the foot of the lofty Cusop, we beheld the setting sun in all its splendour illuminating the distant mountains, and giving such a rich finish and colouring to the landscape, as is not in the power of language to describe.

Mr. —— told me this beautiful spot was not known: the general mass of the people possessing so little curiosity, and this place being so entirely sequestered

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amongst the hills, as to have been seldom explored. I cannot take leave of the Hay without recommending it to every traveller who has a taste for the picturesque, to make a point of visiting the beautiful dingle which overshadows Cusop.

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LETTER VIII.

Brecknock, July 22.

We saw not any thing particularly interesting in the stage from the Hay to Brecknock until a near approach to the town, when mountains heaped upon mountains gradually unveiled themselves to the eye in full and gloomy majesty from the clouds in which they were hid.

These mountains, called the Brecknockshire Beacons, with their enormous high peaks, gave me a faint idea, from the peculiarity of their form, of the sublimity of the Apennines. They are the highest points in South Wales; but it is seldom that a part of them is not shrouded in clouds, and from this cir-

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cumstance it is dangerous to attempt to ascend them without a guide.

Brecknock is situated in a very rainy* atmosphere.

The town of Brecknock is neatly built, clean, and cheerful. It is a place of no trade, and the society here is

* Mr. Jones, in his History of Brecknock, accounts for it in the following manner. "It is remarkable that the quantity of rain falling in Breckon is nearly double that which falls in London in the same space of time. Yet the atmosphere is not much colder than that of the metropolis, though rather variable. It is accounted for by the vicinity of Breckon to the southern range of hills, and particularly to Bannai Brecheiniog. The great height of the Beacons frequently intercept the clouds charged with watery particles, in their passage from south to west, from whence the rainy wind generally blows; but these inconveniences (if such they be) are compensated for by the advantages derived from them. The rough blasts that sweep their tops bring with it ruddy health in our valleys, and epidemic diseases are rarely known."

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more select than in any other town in South Wales, from its chief inhabitants consisting of very old and respectable families who have retired on their fortunes; there was no lodging to be had in the town.

On a former visit into Wales I remarked an universal spirit of hospitality in the Welsh; and I now perceive that although at first they are very diffident in receiving strangers, yet one introductory letter only would have proved to me a sufficient passport through the whole of the principality. I feel proud in adding, that I have been offered more introductions than I have been able to make use of. Amongst ancient families, the manners retain much of the primitive good breeding (without the cold formality) of former ages. I have found the people, in general, not only more refined than in many of the counties in England, but also better

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educated. By this I do not mean more accomplished, but possessing less *self importance.* It is a rare thing to see a Welsh lady assume those airs, which in provincial towns throughout England I have too generally observed attached to persons whose wealth has been accumulated by trade. Did women but know the just contempt they draw on themselves by silly pride, and what *little minds* persons of sense infer them to be possessed of, how soon would they discern their error, and be happy to class themselves, not with the elevated (to which they mistakingly think pride belongs), but with the amiable; and know, that it is *only* the *truly great* who are *truly humble!*

If the Welsh possess *pride*, it is that of ancestry, which seldom offends, because it is that sort of local, not insolent, pride, which never oversteps the bounds of good breeding.

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To your ladyship I make no apology for this accidental digression. Your mind, elevated as your rank, has always soared above such puerile feelings.

The Welsh are strong in their national prejudices and opinions; but if they are so, they possess, with quick and ardent dispositions, an openness of heart and spirit of benevolence that shew them to be without guile.

There is little remains of the castle, except detached ruins environed by miserable hovels. The priory church, being magnificently seated on an eminence, and partly concealed by the umbrageous shades of majestic woods, with the babbling Honddu at their feet, is an attractive object. Delightful paths are cut through these woods, called the *priory walks.*

Brecknock castle is said to have been founded as far back as the reign of William Rufus, by Bernard de New-

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march. The town was originally called Aber-Honddu, from being situated at the confluence of the Honddu with the river Usk.

The remains of a Roman entrenchment are to be seen not far hence, and the town is built on the site of a Roman station.

The old college, where divine service is still performed, contains one very fine monument of the Lilly family. Their effigies are in beautiful variegated marble.

On descending the hill as I entered Brecknock, a number of women on foot attracted the notice of my servant, who bid me observe what a gang of gypsies we were meeting. They proved to be no other than some of the Welsh peasantry, who were clad in the complete costume of their country. A short petticoat, with a very long waisted gown, the ends of which are pinned back, and, (though in the *dog days*) subjoined

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to a long dark blue cloth cloak; a mob cap open at the ears; and men, women, and children, universally wear round black beaver hats. At Usk I formerly observed the extreme beauty of the womens' eyes, and much sprightliness of countenance. Such beauty is not so perceptible here; and their dress which I have described, when on old women, does not tend to improve them.

The common language spoken is Welsh; at the Hay they talk a barbarous sort of English. The manners of the Welsh peasantry, even if they do not understand you, are never uncouth, they are even courteous and obliging.

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LETTER IX.

Caermarthen, July 25.

THE stage from Brecknock to Trecastle, and thence to Llanymddovry, improves every mile in beautiful scenery. The mountains retire to a considerable distance, and verdant hills encircle the valleys smiling with fertility. Advancing towards Llanymddovry, woody cliffs, down which sparkling streams hurry themselves, but often intercepted in their course by the trees which cover their sides, display the rich variety of nature's charms; for in Wales she is so whimsical a dame, as to change her aspect to the ardent gaze of the astonished traveller at every mile. At Llanymddovry I entered the beautiful vale of Towy; in which this retired little town is situated.

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Though the houses are very mean, yet there is a neat uniformity and cheerfulness about the place, which renders the general air very striking; and the walk from the inn up to the church, seated on a hill, is remarkably pretty. A stranger who loves to contemplate sylvan scenery may pass a few days with much satisfaction in this valley, at this season of the year; but in winter it must be a dreadful residence, for the meadows are then deeply flooded, and even now the mail coach forded a rapid and broad river in passing to Caermarthen.

Llandilovawr, which I yesterday morning reached to breakfast, surpasses in wretchedness any place I ever saw. The inn is more like a great barn than a house of reception for travellers; but what is wanting in comfort is made up for in the exorbitant charges of the landlord, whose bill exceeded what was presented me at Oxford. At Llandilo

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it is so glaring, that those who have stopped at the Bear once are seldom weak enough to purchase discomfort on such terms a second time; though for once the temptation to see Newton Park, and the ruin of Dinavor castle, are attractions too alluring to be relinquished by those who have a taste for such objects.

This park has no dull uniformity to excite gloom, it is so happily diversified with such lovely hills and dales, which are richly grouped with knolls of majestic oaks, and whilst the luxuriant valley is watered by the mazy wanderings of the sparkling Towy, it is embellished with gentlemen's seats; amongst the most conspicuous of which is Golden Grove. In one view such a variety of landscape is rarely combined: wood, water, castles seated apparently in the clouds, beautiful hills, peaceful cottages, and, in short, all that the painter

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could wish or the poet describe. And as Mr. Dyer has so happily done it in his Grongar Hill, distinctly visible from Lord Dinavor's park, I cannot give your ladyship a more perfect idea of this enchanting scene than by quoting him.

" Now I gain the mountain's brow,
What a landscape lies below!
No clouds, no vapours, intervene;
But the gay, the open scene,
Does the face of nature shew
In all the hues of heaven's bow;
And swelling to embrace the light,
Spreads around beneath the sight.

Ever charming, ever new,
When will the landscape tire the view!
The fountains fall, the rivers flow,
The woody valleys warm and low;
The windy summit, wild and high,
Roughly rushing to the sky!
The pleasant seat, the ruin'd tow'r,
The naked rock, the shady bow'r;

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The town and village, dome and farm,
Each give each a double charm,
As pearls upon an Ethiop's arm."

The ruins of Dinavor castle are embowered in the thick shades of a woody eminence, and the turrets alone render it discernible until a near approach. The entrance is by a gateway into a circular court, which is thickly planted with hazles, and the dilapidated walls are covered with the solitary ivy. Looking down a dark chasm, I was told, beneath had formerly been the dungeons; and next was shewn a place called the chapel, consisting now of a heap of ruins. Proceeding up broken stone steps to an immense height, encompassed by a sort of rampart, the round tower, almost demolished, with the imperfect remains of an apartment, were shewn me, containing a window,

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from which was discerned the approach of an enemy*.

* Evans gives the following account of Dinavor. "This castle, which Giraldus saw and described, was razed to the ground by Rhys, the father of Maelgon, in whose possession it then, though unjustly, was. This took place six years after his writing his Itinerary, A. D. 1194. It was, however, quickly rebuilt, as we find two undutiful sons of Rhys having collected a body of hot-headed rebels, came before Dinavor, and took the castle garrisoned by their father's men, the following year. It was, however, wrested out of their hands by their nephews, 1204. Again in possession of Rhys Fychen, and afterwards during a violent siege from the force of Rhys, his nephew, and auxiliary troops of Foulke, Viscount Caerdiff, it was surrendered by capitulation, the garrison marching out with the honours of war in 1213. After suffering probably many more changes, of which history is silent, till 1257, when defended by a garrison from North Wales, it held out against an English army till relieved by forces under Llewellyn, and then witnessed the most terrible engagement that had ever taken place between the English and Welsh, in which the

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On my asking the guide if they believed in ghosts in this part of Wales, he answered very seriously, " that one was to be seen every evening wandering about the castle." I next enquired if he put any faith in witches; when he informed me, that old Margaret, who had not been long dead, was the terror of the neighbouring farmers, she did so much mischief to their cattle; and whenever a brewing took place, a certain spell (which he described) was used to prevent her malicious machinations.

latter were victorious: the former being obliged to fly, leaving more than two thousand men slain on the field of battle. But it soon had to view the sad reverse; the chosen of freedom's sons completely defeated in the memorable battle of Llandilovar, 1282, when the chief strength and spirit of the country were broken and overcome, and their warlike genius harassed and jaded to death, retired to the banks of the Wye, and expired in the person of Llewellyn in the pass Pont Crewyn."

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I was sorry to observe the parish church of Llandilo quite deserted, and the place chiefly filled with sectaries, who crowd from all parts to listen to itinerant preachers. An immense multitude of people assembled in the market-place to hear one of these preachers, who continued above two hours making such a hideous noise in an unknown jargon, and uttered with such vehemence, as could inspire but little true devotion, that it is impossible to describe such extraordinary, irregular worship.

A sort of methodistical mania is rapidly spreading throughout South Wales. A gentleman in pointing out to me the church of Llannon, informed me that often there were not half a dozen persons to join the parson and clerk, whilst the chapel was overflowing with a numerous congregation.

During the last year, I have since been informed, upwards of one hundred

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and twenty chapels have been erected, and near eight thousand persons admitted into the methodist society.

It is deeply to be lamented that these establishments owe their flourishing state to the negligence of our clergy; and did they expound the Scriptures to the poor with the same zeal that these uneducated men attempt to do, and teach them in plain and simple language the duties they have to fulfil in life, to render them good Christians, and good members of society, such numbers would not have deserted the established church. Where, allow me to ask, is the pastor of his flock too often to be found in these days? Is it in the midst of his parishioners, listening to their wants, relieving their distresses, and visiting the sick?—No! he is too often to be seen in the field followed by a pack of hounds, leaping over hedge and ditch with the agility of harlequin, and may be mis-

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taken for some 'Squire Western, as he has no clerical attire to distinguish him. Neither does his private family assemble to devotional exercises, nor he to devotional study.

On expressing my concern to Dr. —— that methodism was spreading so extensively, it surprised me to find he considered it an essential good. Before its promulgation, he observed the most of the common people spent their Sunday evenings at the ale-house, whence they returned always intoxicated, which is not now the case. I hope the general mass of the community in humble life do not possess the vices of which Mr. Crabb, in his Poems, has drawn so hidious and disgusting a picture. If it be a true one, how much might the bishops and curates of the church diminish, if they could not eradicate, such vices! Can these ignorant sectaries be blamed for

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attempting to learn the road to heaven from any man who pretends to point it out to them?

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LETTER X.

Caermarthen, July 26.

THE stage from Llandilo to Caermarthen is singularly beautiful. Every hill is richly clothed, and every valley is smiling with fertility. The Towy takes a thousand whimsical meanderings, and every now and then an isolated ruin shews its hoary head, seated on an eminence. Between Llandilo and Caermarthen we passed Middleton-hall, a fine seat of Sir William Paxton's. If his family had been in Wales, I should have had the gratification of being able to have given your ladyship a description of his country residence. When at Llandilo, I wished to have seen Caregcannon castle, but an opportunity offering to proceed to Caermarthen, I con-

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tented myself with gazing on it at a distance. Indeed it would be almost endless to attempt exploring every castle that meets the eye in this principality.

Caermarthen is a very old and considerable town, containing long wide streets, with a variety of shops, and many respectable houses. It is situated about two miles from the sea, almost at the extremity of the beautiful vale of Towy, and commands on all sides most romantic and picturesque scenery. Caermarthen stands on the banks of the river Towy, which is navigable from the Bristol channel, and its harbour contains ships of nearly three hundred tons burthen. The salmon fishery is considerable. The fish are taken in boats called corracles*. A fisherman walking with one

* "They used small boats made of ozier, for the purpose of fishing or of passing rivers. They were not of an oblong form, but nearly round, of

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on his back, which is frequently to be seen, looks very much like a tortoise. The surrounding country is so rich and plentiful as to enable the inhabitants to carry on an immense trade with London, Bristol, and Ireland. The exports in butter and oats are great. The bridge, consisting of eight arches, appears by its architecture to be ancient, as is the town, which having been the residence of the Welsh princes, underwent many trials of war during their reign.

It was taken and retaken by different combatants, and from every account obtained, appears to have been a Roman as well as a British station. This proves the wisdom of the ancient inhabitants, as well as of the Romans, in choosing

a triangular shape. These boats were so slight, that the fishermen usually carried them on their shoulders." *Williams' Ancient History.*

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this place as a spot of defence: for a very able modern engineer has declared it to be singularly calculated as a military post to arrest the progress of an invading army.

The castle which stood on a high rock overlooking the river, has no other remains, except an ancient gateway; within is the county gaol.

Caermarthen is governed by a mayor, aldermen, and council; its charter is formed on the plan of that of the city of London. It was obtained by the father of the present Lord Dinavor, when he represented the county in parliament.

The town of Caermarthen, as well as this district of the country, is so rapidly improving in population, as to have doubled within the last thirty years. It is at present estimated to contain nine thousand inhabitants.

The town-hall is spacious: it was built after a plan of the late Sir Robert Tay-

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lor's. The market house where the butchers meat is exposed to sale is conveniently inclosed, and very neat.

The poors'-house, a short distance from the town, is so clean and well regulated, that it is a pleasure to observe so many infirm old people comfortably lodged; and by the excellent management of the matron, on the slender allowance of only fourpence a day each person, I understand, they live very well. I was indebted to one of the chief magistrates, a gentleman of respectability and much public spirit, for obtaining a sight of every thing worth observation in Caermarthen. The process of working the tin mines is very curious. The adjacent houses are so considerable as to constitute a small town of themselves. Lord Cawdor, in the upper part of the country, had immense lead mines, and the lead used to be conveyed to Caermarthen to be smelt-

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ed into bars, but on account of the war the workings are now discontinued.

In the town and county are numerous sectaries. The Methodists have wide and extended influence, particularly the Calvinists. The Wesleyans, who are considered as Armenians, are also much attended; but I am told the Calvinistic doctrine makes a deep impression on the people in general. There are various meeting houses of different sects; that of the dissenters is one of the most ancient in Wales, and the congregation is numerous.

The inhabitants are much addicted to superstition. It was related to me of a clergyman, that walking home of a moonlight night, in passing through the church-yard of Eglyscimmon in Caermarthenshire, he beheld his own figure drest in his surplice, standing beside a grave reading the burial service, with a crowd about him. He started at the

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circumstance; and only a week afterwards was called upon to perform the service on the very same spot, and with the very same people he had seen at the time around him.

In the diocese of St. David's, the parson's wife, who related the above story, walking home on a very dark night beheld a light approaching, for which she was most thankful; but her companion exclaimed with dismay, "it was a *death light**!"—for it was borne by an invisible hand, and accompanied them for a considerable distance. It was, doubtless, an *ignis fatuus*.

* In the county of Caermarthen there is hardly one that dies but some person sees his *light* or *candle*, when the *spirit* is supposed to glide swiftly by.

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LETTER XI.

Caermarthen, July 28.

THE county of Caermarthen can boast of having produced men of genius as well as of learning. From the fashionable promenade, called the Parade, which commands a beautiful view of the adjacent country, a spot was pointed out to me under the brow of Llangunner hill called *White-house*, where Sir Richard Steele is said to have written his celebrated comedy, "The Conscious Lovers," and several papers in the Tatler and Guardian. He married Miss Scarlock, an heiress of this town, where he died, in a house belonging to the Scarlock family, afterwards converted into the Ivy Bush inn. By Lady Steele he had a daughter, afterwards Lady Trevor. The estate has

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long since been sold, and is become the property of different people. White-house now belongs to Admiral Sawyer.

Sir Richard Steele is buried in Caermarthen church; but so far from being distinguished by monumental honours, not even a common tomb-stone marks where his remains are deposited. It is supposed his grave is near the south-east door, just at the entrance into the church. Though no proud monument records his fame, yet his moral writings will ever live, and he will always be remembered in the page of English history, as the polite scholar, elegant critic, and the great reformer of English style in literature.

James Howel was also a native of this county. He is distinguished by his highly interesting letters. He was our envoy to Spain in 1622, and afterwards was under secretary of state. This gentleman was supposed to be the finest scholar of his time.

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Doctor Tucker, the late Dean of Gloucester, was a Caermarthenshire man. I believe it is only partially known that Dr. Tucker was maternally descended from the Bradshaws of D——, in Pembrokeshire, of the same family with the Bradshaw, who was president at the trial of Charles the First. His family had large estates in Pembrokeshire. The name of Bradshaw is now extinct.

Dyer, the poet, was likewise born in Caermarthenshire. He wrote his Grongar Hill at Aberglasney, the seat of his family. Many of his descendants are now alive, with whom I have the honour to be slightly acquainted.

To the above must be added the present Mr. Serjeant Williams, who is justly distinguished for being one of our most learned and eminent lawyers.

The church is handsome, and has a very good organ. It contains several monuments of the gentry of the county,

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particularly a very ancient one of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, which was removed from White-friars near the town, at the destruction of the monasteries and religious houses by Henry the Eighth. This great warrior is very well known in history for the decided and successful support he gave the Earl of Richmond (afterwards King Henry the Seventh) when he landed at Milford, and marched with him to Bosworth, where they defeated the tyrant Richard the Third. Sir Rhys ap Thomas was the ancestor of the present Lord Dynevor, who inherits all the splendid virtues of his noble and princely forefathers.

Notwithstanding the eminent services rendered by Sir Rhys ap Thomas to Henry the Seventh, Henry the Eighth had his grandson Rhys Griffyth attainted. The accusation was a conspiracy to depose Henry the Eighth, and to place James the Fifth of Scotland on the

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throne. This violent act of Henry's had no colour for justice, but originated in the jealousy of the power and influence of Sir Rhys ap Thomas's grandson. Rhys Griffyth was found guilty; all his immense estates were confiscated, and in revenge bestowed on many of the neighbouring families, particularly the Vaughan's of Golden Grove, who inherited all the wide extended property which the present Lord Cawdor enjoys.

There is a free grammar school, and a dissenting academy, one of the first established in Wales. This seminary can boast of many eminent men. That great divine and mathematician Dr. Price, as well as the celebrated David Williams, were educated at this academy*.

* The academy was kept by the Rev. Samuel Jones, a celebrated popular preacher among the dissenters. Some of this gentleman's friends attribute to him the suggesting the *Funding System* to Mr. Pitt.

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Tradition describes Merlin to have lived his prophetic time near Caermarthen, although the Italian poet gives him a French birth. Nothing is certainly known of him. Camden says, "All monkish writers who mention him, make him either a prophet or a magician: but a judicious author, and very conversant in British antiquities, informs us, he was a man of extraordinary learning and prudence for the time he lived in, and that for some skill in mathematics, many fables were invented by the vulgar, which being afterwards put in writing, was handed down to posterity.'

Another author describes him, "A prophet and magician, son of a Cambrian nun. Vortigern, when King of Britain, made Merlin Prince of Wales."

Merlin's hill and cave are situated in the vale of Towy, about two miles from the town. But Spenser, in his Fairy Queen, describes his cave to lie amongst the woody recesses of Dynevor.

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" And if thou ever happen that same way
To travel, go to see that dreadful place.
It is a hideous hollow cave like bay
Under the rock, that lies a little space
From the swift Barry, tumbling down apace
Amongst the woody hills of Dinevaur.
But dare thou not, I charge, in any case,
To enter into that same baleful bower,
For fear the cruel fiends should thee unawares
devour."

To this cave, in the vicinity of Caermarthen, many travellers resort. It is situated in the parish of Aberguilly, not far from the palace of the Bishop of St. David's, which being only a modern built mansion, conveys no idea of the grandeur attached to that of a prelate.

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LETTER XII.

Swansea, July 29.

After a most fatiguing stage of twenty-eight miles over a road entirely formed of large stones, and a constant succession of steep hills, or rather precipices, I reached Swansea yesterday evening. The variety of romantic views from Caermarthen to this place it would be endless to describe. At the distance of seven miles from hence, I first beheld the blue waves of the ocean mingling apparently with the horizon, whilst its distant waters were borne into the Dulas at Ponterdulas, where the counties of Caermarthen and Glamorgan are divided by a stone bridge.

Nothing of the magnificent scenery which surrounds this maritime town

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was visible to me until this morning, when strolling towards the pier, a most extensive and bold landscape so agreeably surprised me, that I paused repeatedly in admiration.

Swansea, by tourists in general, has been described as dirty, smoky, and disagreeable, and its grand views passed over in silence. The actual situation of the town is beautiful. Of the cleanliness of its streets I can say little; but the idea of its being impregnated with smoke from the copper works is an unfounded prejudice: they are a mile and a half distant from the town, and I never beheld a clearer atmosphere. People too often follow the general opinion of others, without taking the trouble either to judge for themselves, or investigate the fact. In the accounts I have hitherto given your ladyship, I have endeavoured (since no local partialities can influence me as a stranger) to adhere to truth,

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and neither to embellish nor add any descriptions of places, persons, or manners, but as they appeared to me just and accurate at the time; and if I have dissented from the opinions of others, it was not from affectation, but from the existing situation of things. Dr. Cogan, in his excellent Tour on the Banks of the Rhine, says, "There is a strong propensity in our dispositions, particularly if we be the inexperienced traveller, to consider a few individuals with whom we may have occasional intercourse in passing through a country, as genuine specimens of the whole. If they be courteously treated by one or two persons, the people are marked in our minutes as civil and polite. If, on the contrary, our reception be cold and formal, if we observe that a frown sits upon the brow, we are prone to conclude the community, in general, are void of urbanity."

The above observation is so just, and

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I so fully enter into the sentiments, that in speaking of the Welsh nation I wish to judge only of them as a community at large, though when urbanity seems universal, it is impossible not to set it down as a national character*.

Swansea, which I was attempting to describe, is encircled by a beautiful bay, deemed, I understand, the finest in England. To the left is seen the rocky shores of Oyster-mouth (or the Mumbles) whose whitened village stands on the verge of the ocean, with a peninsula,

* Giraldus Cambrensis describes the Welsh people as "of acute and subtle genius. In civil causes they exerted all their power of rhetoric. In private company or in seasons of public festivity, they were very facetious in their conversation, with a view of entertaining the company, and displaying their own wit."

Williams, in his History of Wales, says, "Irritability, indecision, and credulity, remain the general failings of the Cambrian nation."

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whence two small islands project. The pier is handsome, and the smooth sands spread along the shore afford inviting rides and walks. The quay (or strand, as it is called) is filled with a quantity of trading vessels continually sailing up and down the Tavy; they form a very cheerful scene.

My lodgings are a short distance from the town; the place goes by the whimsical name of *The World's End.* This world's end borders on elysium, commanding the beautiful scenery of Mount Pleasant, where some excellent houses are built for the accommodation of strangers; and a little beyond it is Heathfield Lodge, a handsome villa surrounded by pretty pleasure grounds, belonging to Sir Gabriel Powell.

The Burrows, which command a pleasing view of the ocean, pier, and shipping, is the fashionable promenade for company, and contains some good

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lodging houses. Jordan's is considered the most elegant and commodious.

The *anathemis maritima*, or sea camomile, grows in profusion about this place. And an elegant species of rose covers the Burrows in various parts, called *rosa spinosissima*, or burnet-rose. Likewise a very rare plant, *eryngium maritimum*, sea eringa.

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LETTER XIII.

Swansea, Aug. 1.

THE impression of the scene I this evening beheld, in going to view the castle, will not be easily erased from my memory. The keeper ushered the gentleman and lady who accompanied me by a flight of steps from the court-yard into an immense hall, probably in former times a gallery or banqueting room. Here we beheld a strange assemblage of figures; old women, ragged, dirty, and speaking a language unintelligible, seated in groups, some employed in knitting, others lolling in vacancy and idleness, surrounded by numberless children, who, besides being without shoes and stockings, were otherwise half naked, and looking like little savages playing about

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in this half obscure and high vaulted apartment, now converted into a poor-house. How different from that at Caermarthen! Passing through this gloomy place we came into a sort of anti-room. Mr. —— whispered me, "Observe that man," pointing to one seated in a chair, of a ferocious, dark, and horrid countenance. Your ladyship will not be surprised at the chill which crept through my veins, when informed he had last Sunday *stabbed* his only son, a youth of fifteen.

Beside him stood leaning against the window a young woman, who gazed at us very intently, but did not speak: she, I understood, was deranged. In the midst of so extraordinary a scene I could have fancied I had got into the castle of Udolpho, surrounded by banditti. We passed to the ruinous part of the castle by an awkward ascent of broken stone steps to the ramparts, where a broad ex-

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panse of ocean before us was accompanied by a most magnificent prospect of considerable extent. The figure, the countenance, of the man I had just beheld, haunted me, and I enquired of Mr. P—— (who is a respectable magistrate in Swansea), how it happened he was not in close custody." Such is the humanity of the Welsh, that notwithstanding the magnitude of his crime, as the poor youth was in a fair way of recovery, this inhuman father, who had committed the deed *only in a passion*, was permitted, under the care of the jailor, to leave his cell, that he might breathe the air.

On our return, the young woman I had before seen was walking in a quick pace to and fro the court. We determined to speak to her, but she prevented us by advancing to Mr. P——, and, without the least symptom of insanity, requested his interest to get her liberated. She said, "she had been most

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cruelly confined for the last three months, as she was now perfectly well." There was not any thing wild even in her looks, and all she said appeared perfectly rational and just.

This young woman was confined for flightiness of conduct, rather than actual madness, as she has frequently lucid intervals. She brought to my memory these touching lines of the poet.

"But, oh! her victim feels the heaviest stroke,
When e'er at intervals the spell is broke;
When casual reason is a while restor'd,
And they themselves are by themselves deplor'd."
The Pains of Memory.

There was, however, nothing in the person of this female to excite interest.

Not so poor Susan, whom a singular chance led me to see at Hereford. Walking one evening in the precincts of the lunatic asylum, which is pleasantly situated, the noise of singing and dancing

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arrested my attention, and I enquired of my friend with whom I was walking what it meant. I was answered, that "*it is only poor Susan.*" We paused: the wild sweet tones she uttered in frantic merriment, accompanied with her quick and boisterous steps in dancing, were heart-piercing sounds. Two men at the same time were drawn to the spot, one of whom barbarously asked, "*Where, Susan, is Henry?*" Henry was the fond, the cherished idol of her soul. Though poor, he was industrious and honest, and loved her with an affection as pure as glowed in her own virtuous bosom. She had parents (shall I deem them misguided or cruel?), but they consented not to the happiness of the young pair, and the separation that followed struck the death-blow to every finer faculty of their minds, and both were proclaimed *lunatics.*

The heart-rending question of the

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unfeeling man in a moment touched a chord that had *only* ceased to vibrate.

"That well known name awaken'd all her woes."

The wild song, the frantic dance, was over.

"Henry!" cried she with eager haste.

"Yes, do you not know me? I am he!"

"No," cried she fixing her dark eyes on him with an expression of countenance I shall never forget, "Oh, no! you are not my Henry!"

The scene was so affectingly touching we found ourselves unable to remain longer, but impressed with a strong desire to behold more of this interesting young creature; who, Mrs. —— assured me, was perfectly harmless, for she often visited her, and took her little presents, being intimately acquainted with the gentleman to

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whose care the unhappy persons were committed.

The following evening we were admitted to visit her. Susan was standing sad and melancholy in her cell, loaded with straw. There was nothing in her appearance to create alarm, though much to excite the deepest interest and pity. She was young, beautiful, with large dark eyes, full of a melting expression of woe, and her pale cheek, her slender and graceful form, looked like a drooping lily. She wore no cap, and her dark hair was arranged not unbecomingly. Her dress was simply a chemise of dark camblet, and her fair arms were bare above the elbow. She knew the gentleman who attended us, and, extending her white hand to him, said, "she was very ill, and was treated very cruelly, for she had only straw to sleep on," and earnestly solicited for a bed. Such an appeal to his humanity was

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more than sufficient, and he ordered her keeper to furnish her with a bed.

She displayed some trinkets to the lady that accompanied me, whom she mournfully smiled upon. Such was *poor Susan;* she would have made a most interesting picture; nor do I think that Sterne's Maria could have proved a more affecting subject.

It has often struck me that even in this humane country lunatics are sometimes treated with unnecessary severity. For their own sakes as well as that of others much restraint must be endured, but why deprive them of a single comfort which they may safely enjoy? I understand that it is designed by the legislature to meliorate the condition of that most piteous class of beings, and it is now apprehended that so much contradiction and irritation are not likely to restore sanity of intellect. A Howard, I hope, will not be long wanting.

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Swansea castle * in its present state is devoid of uniformity or beauty, even in decay. It has one architectural curiosity, that renders it striking at a distance; which is, a light range of open arches running along the parapet. It is appropriated to various uses; a poor-house, a gaol, a Roman catholic chapel, a blacksmith's shop, and a receptacle for pigeons. The lead that covers the market-house, and given by Oliver Cromwell, was brought from St. David's cathedral.

* The following account of Swansea castle is given by Camden: "The castle, now the gaol and workhouse, and burnt by Griffin, Prince of South Wales, soon after its erection, was probably built by Henry, Earl of Warwick, when he fortified the town, in the year 1113."

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LETTER XIV.

Swansea, August 3.

I NEVER spent an afternoon with more delight than the former one, in exploring the peculiarly romantic scenery of Oystermouth. I was conveyed there in a carriage of a singular construction, built for the conveniency of parties who go hence to Oystermouth to spend the day.

This car contains twelve persons, and is constructed chiefly of iron; its four wheels run on an iron railway by the aid of one horse, and is an easy and light vehicle.

Nothing could be more propitious than the afternoon, to shew every

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object to advantage. A refreshing breeze sprung up from the sea, close on the shore of which we proceeded the whole way; and the rays of light which in vivid tints reflected a variety of colours on the hills, sweeping along this magnificent bay, were most beautiful. The white houses of the village of Oystermouth are finely contrasted by the high rock of limestone, at the base of which it is situated, and looks so picturesque. The sea washes its shores, and many of its little buildings are half concealed by the foliage of trees that spread along the lower part of the Cliff.

I found an elderly person in the village who offered to be my guide, and proved very communicative. We went to the highest point of these tremendous cliffs, whence appears such a variety of sublime objects, as are seldom combined in one view. I was

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shewn the isle of Lundy rising out of the ocean, wholly detached from any other point of land. Oxmouth, Pool-day, Penarth, and Caswell bay, with the extensive shores of Devon and Somersetshire.

Changing the aspect, the town of Swansea resting on the shores of its lovely bay appeared, while hill upon hill, and mountain upon mountain, seemed to rise, till lost in the vast expanse of air. On one of the peninsulas which surround Oystermouth is placed a lighthouse, and in this small harbour there is safe anchorage for vessels when storms assail the mariner. A little farther to the left is a small creek called Lunslaid. The rocky scenery of Caswell bay, if visited at low water, is singularly beautiful, being encompassed by rocks, which, forming themselves into a variety of grotesque shapes, render the situation

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highly romantic, and from numerous excavations, its caverns are well worth exploring; and parties in summer take cold collations to spend the day amidst its wild scenery. My guide shewed me the beds where the oysters are found, and from which this place derives the name of Oystermouth. In point of singularity of situation this village is unique. The Western hills so entirely hide it from the sun, that during the three winter months that luminary is never seen, nor its influence felt.

The church from all points of view is pretty; and the flourishing state of the rosemary trees upon the graves give a pensive interest to the impressive admonition—*memento mori*; and we may say with Gay,

"Upon her grave the rosemary they threw,"

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for it grows here in beautiful exuberance.

The magnificent ruin of the castle adjoining to the hamlet of Norton is of considerable dimension: from the redundance of ivy that mantles its walls it is scarcely discernible until a near approach, though surrounded by broken and variegated cliffs, which, together with its aspect towards the sea, gives it a wild and solemn appearance *.

Oystermouth castle is a ruin of vast extent: it appears to have had

* The view of this castle was drawn and presented to me by a young lady of Swansea, the worthy daughter of a most respectable divine, who to an exquisite taste with her pencil unites considerable skill in the sister art of music, accompanied by a voice uncommonly melodious and beautiful. But she is the daughter of parents whose virtues are embellished with science and taste on every subject. See page 163, Vol. I.

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a portcullis and double gates; and judging by the size of its ruinous apartments, to have been a stately place. There are still winding staircases, intricate passages, and some rooms which are inaccessible. Of its antiquity I could gain no intelligence in the village, nor any legend, though I visited half the old people resident in it for the purpose*.

Between Swansea and Oystermouth are the following gentlemen's

* The Swansea guide contains the following account of it: "This castle, with much of the land adjoining, formerly belonged to the Lords of Gower; the first of whom were the Beaumonts Earls of Warwick; by them Gower was conveyed to the crown. King John gave it to the Breoses, Lords of Brecon; from them it came by marriage to the noble family of the Mowbreys, from thence to the Herberts, and by marriage of an heiress to the noble family of the Somersets, in which they are now vested in the person of his grace the Duke of Beaufort.

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villas. Marino, belonging to Edward King, Esq.; Veranda, the cottage of C. R. Jones, Esq.; and Upper and Lower Sketty.

There are commodious lodgings situate on an eminence in Oystermouth, called Thistle Boonhouse.

On the shores of this bay (where at low water the stumps of the trees are still to be seen), was formerly a wood, called Silver-wood.

There are seven castles in the district of Gower, which come in the following order: Oystermouth, Pennard, Swansea, Oxuich, Penrice, Llaughar, and Llandeury.

Pennard castle, which stands on a sand bank, is said by the neighbouring peasantry to have been raised in one night by enchantment, and is inhabited by fairies.

Penrice castle, the property of Thomas Mansel Talbot, Esq., is co-

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tiguous to his mansion, and now converted into an aviary.

Of Oxuich castle, nothing more remains except the compartments of a Gothic window. The other two castles I have not been able to obtain any history of.

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LETTER XVI.

Swansea, August 7.

During my first tour into Wales I told your ladyship I had seen no Welsh bards, nor heard the notes of the harper. Yesterday evening I was invited to an agreeable party at Dr. T——'s, to hear that instrument played. The harp in Wales, like the bagpipes in Scotland, is the national music of the country.

A sort of romantic fancy takes possession of the imagination, and one assimilates the idea of a harper or minstrel, such as Dr. Beattie describes him:

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" His waving locks and beard of hoary grey:
And from his bending shoulders decent hung
His harp, the sole companion of his way,
While to the whistling wind responsive rung;
And ever as he went some merry lay he sung."

Though the air of the noble race of Skinkin was pretty and novel, the performer had so much the look of a common fiddler, as in a moment to put all fanciful conceits to flight. The Welsh harp has not the fine full tone of our English ones, but a tinkling sort of sound, which requires that it should be exceedingly well played to delight the ear. Yet in former ages in what repute was not merely the harp, but the minstrel. It was shewn me upon record, that once a king, a bard, and a minstrel, were of equal rank in the principality*.

* Warrington, in his Ancient History of Wales, gives the following account of bards and min-

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It appears however from Percy's Essay on the English Minstrels, that the harp was a national instrument in Scotland, or at least in the north of England, as well as in Wales.

Percy says, " There is hardly an ancient ballad or romance wherein a minstrel or harper appears but he is characterized, by way of eminence, to

strels: " The domestic bard was considered next in rank to the chief bard of Wales. He accompanied the army when they marched into the enemy's country, and when they prepared for battle, he sung them an ancient poem, called *Unbenniath Prydain*, or the Monarchy of Britain; and for his service he was rewarded with the most valuable beasts of plunder which they had taken in their incursions. The talents of the Welsh bards were not solely employed in preserving the descents of families, in the praise of heroes, or in recording illustrious actions; they sometimes in plaintive numbers mourned over the tombs of the fallen warrior.

" The second class of minstrels were performers upon instruments, chiefly the harp."

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have been ‘ of *the north countrie.*’ It is probable, that under this appellation were formerly comprehended all the provinces on the north of the Trent.”

I take the liberty of inserting from Mr. Warrington’s work the following plaintive elegy, written by Llywarchhen, a bard of the sixth century, on the death of Cynddylan, Prince of Powys.

“ Come forth and see, ye Cambrian dames,
Fair Pengwern’s royal roof in flames!
(The foe that speaks a barb’rous tongue),
And pierced Cynddyland’s princely head,
And stretched your champion with the dead.
His heart, which late with martial fire,
Bade his lov’d country’s foes expire,
(Such fires as wastes the forest hill),
Now like the winters ice, is chill.

“ O’er the pale corpse with boding cry
Sad Argoed’s cruel eagle flies;
He flies exulting o’er the plain,
And scents the blood of heroes slain.

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Dire bird! this night my frighten'd ear
Thy loud ill omen'd voice shall hear;
I know thy cry, that screams for food,
And thirsts to drink Cynddyland's blood.

"No more the mansion of delight,
Cynddylan's hall is dark to night;
No more the midnight hour prolongs
With fires, and lamps, and festive songs.
Its trembling bards afflicted shun
The hall bereaved of Cyndrwyn's son*.
Its pagan visitants are fled;
Its hospitable fires are dead.

"No longer ray'd on either hand,
Its dormitory couches stand;
But all above, around, below,
Dread sights, dire sounds, and shrieks of woe.
Awhile I'll weep Cynddylan slain,
And pour the weak desponding strain;
Awhile I'll sooth my troubled breast,
Then in eternal silence rest."

* Cynddylan was son of Cyndrwyn.

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LETTER XVII.

Swansea, Aug. 8.

A STRANGER who has never had the opportunity of seeing any copper works, will be astonished in beholding the process of working them. They are situated on the banks of the Tivy, environed by coal and iron works. The gloomy smoke which envelopes them is characteristic of the infernal regions, which seem to be realised on entering the immense building, where the flames are ascending; and when the liquid ore is pouring from the raging furnaces, the spectacle is truly sublime. There is a pottery also, in imitation of Wedgwood's ware.

I know not whether working in

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these manufactories has any influence on the complexions of the inhabitants, but all the beauty I observed in the features of the peasantry around Abergavenny is here entirely lost, and the skin is of a sallow and unhealthy hue. Neither do we here find that sparkling intelligence, that brilliant lustre in the eyes, which is there so general. Indeed, during my residence at Swansea I have not seen any person who can be considered very beautiful. The women here are habited in a long jacket or bedgown, of checked worsted, with a petticoat of the same. They are chiefly without shoes and stockings, and instead of the long blue cloak, a piece of scarlet woollen (not unlike the Scotch plaid in shape), with a fringe of the same colour, half a quarter in length at each end. This, loosely hung over the shoulders and pinned at the bosom, is called a *whit-*

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tle. The head dress is composed of a mob cap with a coloured handkerchief, tied so closely over the head, and crossed under the chin with a long corner hanging behind, as would incline a stranger to suppose there was an universal tooth-ach amongst the common people; above all this warm head dress, in the month of August, is added a black beaver hat.

The people in the district of Gower, considering themselves Flemings, disdain the Welsh language, and speak a rude sort of English; neither do they intermarry with the Welsh. It is asserted by most historians, that there certainly is a colony of that nation which inhabit the little territory called *Gwyr*, or by the English entitled "*Little England beyond Wales*," and that their features, deportment, and manners, retain the national character of the Flemings. It is, how-

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ever, a matter of controversy; for it was justly remarked to me by Dr. Turton, who disputes the fact, that if they were Flemings their language would not be English, and if they spoke any other tongue than their native one it certainly would be Welsh; therefore it was more than probable they were of Cornish origin, and possibly may have settled there, when a communication of trade took place between the two countries. In some anecdotes I have been reading of the civil history of the people of Britain, the dress of the Anglo-Saxons is described as consisting "of a large mantle or plaid, fastened with a button or broach," which perfectly resembles the *whittle*, worn by the people said to be Flemings.

The manners of the common people are in these parts far behind in civilization, they are as savagely rude as

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their minds, which I understand are most ignorant, and few of them can either read or write. Indeed, the children are a race of such barbarous, dirty looking, little beings, as proclaim at once the vacancy and indolence of their mothers. I am happy to hear there is now a school established for boys and girls, on the plan invented by Dr. Bell, and brought to such perfection by Mr. Lancaster.

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LETTER XVIII.

Swansea, August 10.

THERE are some lovely walks around Swansea; and if ladies are equal to the very fatiguing exertion of climbling up the tremendous steep of Kelvey hill, they will have a fine bird's eye view of the town of Swansea, with an amazing extent of landscape on the opposite direction.

The temperature of this climate is by no means so mild as the coast of Devon or Somersetshire, and at times the sea breezes are exceedingly piercing. Were I to judge of the salubrity of the air by the church-yard, I should say it was most beneficial in sending people to heaven, for I never before saw one so crowded with graves;

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it is literally walking over the dead in passing through it.

The church itself, in exterior, has not any thing to command notice; within, it is dirty and devoid of ornament.

The market people here want the method of exposing their provisions to advantage, and they look neither nice nor clean. Your ladyship will hardly give credence to me when I tell you, since my residence in so large and populous a place as Swansea I have more than once thought I should have been starved. Neither are the streets, which are regular, handsome, and spacious, kept properly clean, for want of scavengers. I heard the chief magistrate at Caermarthen, when he was showing me the town, severely rebuke one or two persons for being deficient in cleanliness; and it is the duty of people in authority to inter-

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fere in like manner. It is from such omissions that strangers, in taking a hasty survey of towns through which they pass, are apt to imbibe, not merely unfavourable, but unjust impressions of them; and it is a pity that the practice of white-washing the outside of the cottages of the poor was not also adopted within, for their dirty and wretched condition is hardly to be described.

There are two circulating libraries in Swansea. Jenkins's comes under the denomination of the Glamorgan Library, and consists of a selection of philosophical works.

The other is kept by Mrs. Oakley, a respectable widow lady, and her daughter, and contains an excellent assortment of all the newest and best chosen publications. She is moderate in her terms; very intelligent and obliging in giving much useful infor-

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mation to those strangers who frequent her library. The daily papers and monthly publications are to be had there. Mrs. Oakley also deals in a variety of useful articles, and an elegant assortment of trinkets.

At the corner of Goat-street is the house where the celebrated Richard Nash, Esq. was born, who for so long a period ruled the fashionable world at Bath*.

* "Richard Nash, Esq. was born in the town of Swansea, in Glamorganshire, on the eighteenth of October, in the year 1673. His father was a gentleman, whose principal income arose from a partnership in a glass-house; his mother was niece to Colonel Power, who was killed by Oliver Cromwell in defending Pembroke castle against the rebels. He was educated under Mr. Mattock at Caermarthen school, and from thence sent to Jesus College, Oxford, in order to prepare him for the study of the law. The first method he took to distinguish himself at college was, not by application to study, but his assiduity for in-

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Among the most singular Welsh customs may be ranked their matrimonial preparations. The evening

trigue. His stay at college on that account was of short duration.

"The next step he took was, to purchase himself a pair of colours in the army, which situation he thought the best to gratify his inclination for gallantry. He soon became disgusted with the life of a soldier, quitted the army, and entered his name as a student in the Temple books, leading a gay life about town for some years, till his genteel appearance, his polite, manly behaviour, above all his goodness of heart, gained him the acquaintance and esteem of several persons qualified to lead the fashion by birth and fortune.

"About this time (the latter end of the sixteenth century), the city of Bath was reckoned one of the poorest cities in England; the buildings were extremely mean, and the inhabitants rude and unpolite. There were neither ball-rooms nor places of amusement. A few families of distinction resorted here for about six or seven weeks in the spring, and when the company were numerous enough to form a dance, they repaired to the bowling-green, open and exposed to the air,

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before marriage, the bride receives all the married women; who bring her various gifts, such as cheese, tea, sugar,

attended by a violin and hautboy: and in this situation it continued till the year 1703, when Captain Webster took upon him the regulation of the amusements, and conducted the company to the Town-hall. Ten couple were then thought a large assembly; and the gentlemen paid only half a guinea subscription. The accommodations were very indifferent, and few houses capable of receiving any family of distinction. Thus circumstanced was Bath, and thus confined were its amusements, when Mr. Nash first visited it. He was introduced to Captain Webster; an intimacy between them commenced, and he was called the captain's aid-du-camp. The inhabitants of Bath, as well as persons of quality, took every occasion to shew their respect for Mr. Nash; and on the death of Captain Webster, about the year 1710, he was unanimously elected to that seat of government which he so gloriously filled upwards of fifty years.

"The band of music (consisting of only five indifferent performers) used to play at the Grove every morning and evening under large trees,

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which they present to her. The bride's relations, instead of a marriage portion, give her all sorts of household furniture,

which were cut down about forty years since. But soon after the Pump-room was built, the physicians solicited Mr. Nash to lead the company there; which he did, and instantly set on foot a good band of music. A few years afterwards, Mr. Thomas Hamson erected a handsome assembly room; and Mr. Nash had the satisfactory pleasure of seeing the city of Bath flourish in so rapid a manner under his administration, as to be able to vie with any city in Europe for the politeness of its amusements, and elegance of its accommodation.

" Mr. Nash's pride discovered itself by no mark of dignity. He was content with being distinguished only by the ornamental ensign of a white hat; a symbol of the candour of his mind.

" Sometime before his decease, nature gave warning of his approaching dissolution; the worn machine had run itself down to an utter impossibility of repair. He died at his house in St. John's Place, February 3, 1761, aged 87 years; sincerely regretted by every inhabitant of the city of

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which is called in Welsh a *stafell.* That these gifts may not be omitted, the intended marriage is advertised in the following manner, called a *bidding;* from a printed one I copied the two following.

"As we intend to enter into the matrimonial state, we are encouraged by our friends to make a *bidding* on the

Bath, to which he had long been so great a benefactor.

"His corpse was conveyed to the Abbey church with great solemnity. About five the procession moved from his house: the charity girls, two and two, preceded, next the boys of the charity school singing a solemn hymn, next a large band of music sounding at proper intervals a dirge. Three clergymen preceded the coffin, which was adorned with sable plumes, and the pall supported by six senior aldermen and masters of the assembly followed as chief mourners. The crowd was so great, that not only the streets were filled, but even the tops of the houses were covered with spectators." *Swansea Guide.*

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occasion, at the sign of the Red Cock in High-street, Swansea, on Monday the eleventh of May next; at which time we humbly solicit the favour of your good company; and whatever donations you may be pleased to confer on us will be gratefully received, and repaid with pleasure, when called for on a similar occasion,

"By your obedient servants,

"John Bowen,

"Mary John."

Cross Inn, April 27, 1808.

"My daughter (Jane) having lately married, I propose to make a *bidding* for her at my house, on Friday the twentieth of May next, on which occasion I beg leave to solicit the favour of your company; and whatever donations you may be pleased to bestow on her in that day shall at all times be grate-

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fully acknowledged and retaliated on a similar occasion,

"By your most obedient

"Humble servant,

"Thomas Williams."

"N. B. Mary Williams of Llandilo will be thankful for all favours conferred on the bride on that day, and desires that all gifts of that nature may be returned to her at the same time."

From these two singular advertisements, your ladyship will perceive that if the gifts are conferred on the bride, she is expected to make a return for them when any of her kinsfolks or acquaintances marry.

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LETTER XIX.

Swansea, August 12.

THIS week has been a scene of gaiety at Swansea. Races, public breakfasts, balls, and plays, with a very respectable shew of company.

The peculiarly beautiful scenery of the race-course at Crumplyn Burrows, three miles from Swansea, is well worthy of observation. It is a green lawn, close on the sea shore embosomed by the lofty mountains of Glamorganshire, and coloured with a rich variety of hues, from the light and shade reflected by the sun-beams, uniting a small part of the dark woods which overhang Britton Ferry. The solemn grandeur of this magnificent scene was considerably enlivened by the addition of carriages,

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horsemen, foot passengers, and booths scattered in all directions along this lovely valley; and it was impossible not to partake in some measure in the general festivity of the times. One part of the sport, however, was particularly objectionable. No less than four Welsh women made their appearance, mounted on ponies, which they rode with all the spirit and agility of professed jockeys, amidst the concourse of hundreds of spectators, who, with loud huzzas, followed at their heels to see the contest decided.

These unfeminine amusements of field sports for women are, unfortunately, not unexampled. When ladies of rank think proper to indulge in such recreations, they should remember that however they may not detract from their own character, they are nevertheless highly injurious in furnishing a precedent which may produce incalcula-

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ble mischief to the mass of ignorant people, who consider themselves fully sanctioned by the example of those who are styled *the great.* These poor ignorant women, no doubt, thought that they were doing what was right, when supported by gentlemen, who surely would have acted more judiciously in ordering them home to take care of their families; for what sort of wives or mothers can such persons be expected to make?

The theatre is small but commodious, and fitted up with a variety of pretty scenery. The play I saw was one which has met with considerable success at Drury-lane, Mr. Tobin's "Honey Moon." I would say that the plot has considerable merit, were not the plagiarisms too glaring to be admitted; for he borrows his fable not only from Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew," but the husband of the lady assumes all the authority of Don Leon

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in Beaumont and Fletcher's old play of "Rule a Wife and have a Wife." Copied from two such pieces, his comedy possesses much interest, except in the scene of the starved apothecary.

A house tenanted by Mr. Carver, a brazier, is here said "to have been the residence of Oliver Cromwell," and what is now the parlour has been called "his council room." This mansion, which I went over with Dr. T——, retains all its antique carved work, low ceilings, and heavy appearance of former times.

Hume, the historian, narrates, that Cromwell was born at Huntingdon, of good family; but at Swansea it was stated to me, "That he was decended from the family of the Williams's, in Caermarthenshire, and *took* the *name* of *Cromwell* in honour of his kinsman, the Thomas Cromwell in Shakespeare's Henry the Eighth, who was secretary to the celebrated Cardinal Wolsey;"

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that "a from natural attachment to his native country, he was very partial to the principality:" that "at one time he held his court at Swansea, and resided in the house I had the curiosity to visit."

It is further said, "That notwithstanding the number of castles which were destroyed in his time, he spared as many as was in his power; and the only one he laid regular siege to was Cardiff, the breaches of which are still visible; and within the walls are now frequently found some of his iron balls."

* In these traditions there is much error. The extract from the register of St. John's, Huntingdon, given in Brayley's Beauties of England, &c. Vol. VII., proves that the Protector Oliver was really a native of that parish; and there is not any account of his life that mentions his ever having been an inhabitant of Swansea. The probability is, that the good people of that town have confounded his actions with those of some one or other of his ancestors.

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LETTER XX.

Neath, August 20.

THE stage from Swansea to Neath, of eight miles, is so surrounded by the copper works as to deprive the scenery of much of its beauty; yet on entering the vale of Neath, in which this town is situated, I was agreeably surprised to find it neither enveloped in so heavy an atmosphere, nor so undesirable a spot as was represented; for though the streets are narrow and irregular, yet there is such an air of cheerfulness diffused by the rich variety of lovely objects, that it is impossible not to regard every thing with a sensation of pleasure.

This small town, reposing in a valley, with its picturesque bridge, its mazy and clear river, is embellished with a sweep

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of hills so luxuriantly wooded as to add a degree of sylvan softness to the scene, and the amphitheatric one of Drumma, inclosing this enchanting vale, was this evening tinged with such a purple glow from the orient tints of the setting sun illuminating its woody and majestic summits, that on descending from the shady walks of the Gnoll, taking in a distant view of the ocean, and the modest spires of two or three village churches chequered in the plain, I gazed on the landscape with admiration. From all I heard of Neath I had no expectation of meeting with such scenery, and must suppose, so little is this place known to strangers, that impressed by the opinion of those who want taste to discern such a combination of beauties, or have not curiosity to find them out, they pass only through the close part of the town, and exclaim, like a traveller whom, on alighting, I

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heard say, "I shall not stop here, there is nothing worth seeing!" I was half inclined to rectify his mistake, to tell him of the romantic walks and rides of Gnoll, the cascade of Aberdyllis, Neath Abbey, Britton ferry, and innumerable scenes on the borders of the river. Fashion points out a certain route for fashionable tourists, which they seldom are at the trouble to digress from, by which they lose many objects worth seeing, and see as many that are uninteresting. This place, like Swansea, was represented as being enveloped in smoke. This however is not correct, as the copper works are situated a mile from the town, and consequently their smoke cannot affect its atmosphere. It is true some people see objects with different eyes, and some close them altogether, for I declare instead of here entering the regions of Tartarus, I have most happily emerged into Elysium.

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This day has been spent in wandering through the woods of Gnoll grounds. The noble mansion has long been deserted. It is mournful to survey such magnificent desolation—I say magnificent, for not all the devastation time has made can rob it of the venerable grandeur of its ruinous scenery, all of which I walked over with a sensation of melancholy, when I beheld a place formed, if not to insure happiness, at least to anticipate every wish in the way of local amusement, leaving only a mournful wreck of all those beauties, which here so conspicuously prevailed.

The gardener, as I followed him over every spot, told me there formerly were the fish ponds, there the bowling green, where benches were fixed under the tall trees that inclosed it for the accommodation of company; further on was a favourite rabbit warren, and a little beyond a bason that held gold fish, velvet

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walks, shady alcoves, high terraces overhung by luxuriant woods, perfumed shrubberies, embellished with the choicest flowers; the murmuring of waterfalls dashing through the rocks, adjacent to which Sir Digby M——'s mother used to touch her harp in sweetest melody; all these things were —but now all traces of them are lost, as though they had never been!—such a scene of woeful devastation I have no desire to behold again.

The noble mansion shares alike the ravages of time; every apartment is unfurnished, uninhabited, and forsaken; no minstrel strikes the harp in the hall, no bard celebrates the heroic actions of its ancient owner; the dance, the feast, the song, are no more. By a singular ordination of events, this lovely place has closed its gates on its hereditary possessor, and the estate is gone out of the M—— family.

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All persons can have access to the Gnoll; and at the gardener's house, called *the little Gnoll*, his wife, a civil woman, will not only afford the accommodation of a neat apartment, but provide dinner or tea to those who wish to spend a day in the grounds. Two miles beyond Gnoll, seated on an eminence, is the castle and banqueting room, where also an old woman will furnish tea. The scenery is well worth exploring.

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LETTER XXI.

Neath, August 22.

YESTERDAY morning I attended divine service in the parish church at Neath: it is plain and clean, but devoid of ornament. It has a tolerable organ. I am concerned to observe a very thin congregation, and that none of the common people attended.

In the afternoon a Welsh girl shewed me the way to Aberdyllis cascade; a walk of two miles by the high road through the rural village of Cadaxton. The churchyard has the graves so thickly planted with flowers of all sorts as to present the appearance of a rich parterre, instead of the awful mansions of

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the dead; and here most applicable are the lines of Shakespeare.

"With fairest flowers, while summer lasts
I'll sweeten thy sad grave. Thou shalt not want
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose, nor
The azure hare-bell, like thy veins, no, nor
The leaf of eglantine; which not to slander
Outsweeten'd not thy breath."

The graves in Wales, besides being covered with flowers, are for the most part inclosed with a stone, which is whitewashed every Saturday. I saw a female whitewashing the stone at the grave of her mother in the churchyard of Neath, and plucking the weeds from amongst the flowers.

Leaving Cadaxton, in a pretty cottage opposite the woody rock of this roaring cascade I was provided with tea, and to the extreme beauty of the situation was added such perfect neatness and cleanliness within, as outvied even our English cottages.

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Aberdyllis cascade, though it does not precipitate itself from such a height as the waterfall at Melincourt, six miles hence, I am told rivals it in beauty; the mill adds to the romantic aspect of the broken rocks, overhung with trees branching into grotesque forms, and the little ivyed bridge over the Dulas, with the union of Neath river, and white cottages scattered on the lofty cliffs, without diminishing the grandeur of the scene, considerably enlivens it.

We were ferried over the river to the opposite bank; and returned by a path on the side of the canal for two miles, at the foot of stupendous rocks clothed to their summits; and above them rose the distant woods of Gnoll grounds. Leaving the canal and river at Neath bridge, I strayed on to its ruinous abbey, where I witnessed a most extraordinary scene: hundreds of people collected in a large court of this ancient

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mass of building, some of whom were seated on the walls, others peeping through the dilapidated windows, and a great multitude gathered round an itinerant preacher, who was elevated on a bench, wearing a coloured silk handkerchief tied over his head, and declaiming in Welsh in a perpetual and bawling rant, accompanied by violent action. What he delivered to his congregation I know not, but my Welsh servant was so highly diverted as to be in a constant titter. People had rode and walked upwards of thirty miles to hear this man, whose preaching induced them every now and then to utter hideous groans, and move their bodies to and fro.

His ranting can only be compared to that of a madman. This sect, I understood, is called the *jumping methodists;* they are like the quakers, moved by the spirit, and when this enthusiastic madness seizes them, they jump up and

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down to a considerable height, tear their clothes, howl, and in short act as if they were frantic, screaming and jumping all the way home, however long the distance.

Of this sect, I heard both at Llandilo and Swansea, but never saw or heard any of them before*.

* Evans, in his "Sketch of the Denominations of the Christian World," gives the following account of them.

"Originally, this singular practice of jumping during the time allotted for religious worship and instruction was confined to the people called Methodists in Wales, the followers of Harris, Rowland, Williams, and others, known in England by the name of the *Evangelical clergy*. The practice began in the western part of the country, about the year 1760. It was soon after defended by Mr. William Williams (the Welsh poet as he is sometimes called), in a pamphlet, which was patronised by the abettors of jumping in religious assemblies, but viewed by the seniors and the grave with disapprobation. However, in the

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Neath abbey is situated on the western bank of the river Neath, about one mile from the town, and is surrounded

course of a few years the advocates of groaning and loud talking, as well as of loud singing, repeating the same line or stanza over thirty or forty times, became more numerous, and were found among some of the other denominations in the principality, and continue to this day. Several of the most zealous itinerant preachers in Wales recommended to the people to cry *gogoniant* (the Welsh word for glory, amen, &c.), to put themselves into violent agitations, and finally to *jump* until they are quite exhausted, so as often to be obliged to fall down on the floor, or in the field, where this kind of worship was held.

" About the year 1785, I myself happened very accidentally to be present at a meeting which terminated in *jumping*. It was held in the open air, on a Sunday evening, near Newport in Monmouthshire. The preacher was one of Lady Huntingdon's students, who concluded his sermon with the recommendation of *jumping*, and to allow him the praise of consistency, he got down from the chair on which he stood, and *jumped*

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by beautiful and romantic scenery. It was founded in the beginning of the reign of Henry the First, by Richard

along with them. The arguments he adduced for this purpose were, that David danced before the ark, that the babe *leaped* in the womb of Elizabeth, and that the man whose lameness was removed, *leaped* and praised God for the mercies he had received. He expatiated on these topics with uncommon fervency, and then drew the inference that *they* ought to shew similar *expressions* of joy for the blessings which Jesus Christ had put in their possession. He then gave an impassioned sketch of the sufferings of the Saviour, and hereby raised the passions of a few around him to a state of violent agitation. About nine men, and seven women, for some little time rocked to and fro with a kind of frantic fury. Some of the audience flew in all directions, others gazed on in silent amazement. They all gradually dispersed, except the *jumpers*, who continued their exertions from eight in the evening to near eleven at night. I saw the conclusion of it, they all kneeled down in a circle, holding each other by the hand, while one of them prayed with great fervour,

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de Grande Ville or Granville, who held the lordship of Neath, and was one of the twelve Norman knights who conquered Glamorganshire, about the year 1090.

The monks here were at first of the order of Savigny, but soon after became Cistertians. This abbey once afforded a temporary asylum to the unfortunate Edward the Second and his favourite Hugh de Spencer, they having taken a vessel at Bristol, A. D. 1326, and landed in Glamorganshire. This abbey was granted by Henry the Eighth to Sir Richard Williams, alias Cromwell, the great grandfather of the Protector*. It afterwards came into the

and then all rising up from their knees departed. But previous to their dispersion, they wildly pointed up towards the sky, and reminded each other that they should soon meet *there*, and never again be separated.

" I quitted the spot in astonishment."

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possession of the Herberts; from them it was transferred to Sir William Dodington, of Breyinere, in the county of Northampton, knight, by marriage with Mary, daughter of Sir John Herbert, secretary of state to Queen Elizabeth.

Edward Dodington, son of the above Sir William, gave it to his nephew Philip Hobby, Esq., fourth son of Peregrine Hobby, Esq. of Berkshire, who resided at the Abbey House until his death, A. D. 1687, leaving three daughters coheiresses, whose descendants are the present proprietors.

The abbey * is now in a most ruin-

* "The abbey shews the shell of its church, built of rough stone, with lancet windows, which form the north quadrangle. The abbey house, or what succeeded it, is now converted into copper forges. The gates, hall, and gallery, remain, and in the front of a contiguous room were in stone the arms of England and of John of Gaunt." *Camden.*

In the upper strata of the coal pits near this town several fine specimens of dendrites are found.

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ous condition; the habitable part is occupied by some poor and wretched old women.

Neath castle was built by Richard Granville, Lord of Neath, and it is recorded, that he and Constance his wife gave the lands and revenues of the said castle for the endowment of the abbey of Neath. It is also mentioned in history, that having consecrated his portion to God and the monks, he retired to some estates he had in England, and soon afterwards made a pilgrimage to Rome. There are some remains of the castle, which are in the early Norman style.

The lower class of the inhabitants of Glamorganshire possess the superstitions common to their countrymen; one peculiar to them is a belief that there is a supernatural light preceding the death of persons, which traverses from the abode of the dying or dead person to the place of interment. They call it

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a "*cannivyll corfe*;" in English, corpse candle (this is the same light I heard of in Caermarthenshire), and describe it to be a blue light; and some pretend to say, that if they lie down on the ground they can see the whole funeral procession.

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LETTER XXII.

Greenfield, August 23.

I ADDRESS your ladyship from an elegant cottage, where I have spent a few days with some agreeable friends; and I wandered hither on foot from Neath, taking Britton ferry in my way. My expectations of Britton ferry were considerable, from having heard it described by all persons of taste as pre-eminently beautiful; and for once they were not disappointed: though it is only since my visit here that I have beheld, to their full extent, the unrivalled charms of this fairy scene*. This sequestered village, remote from the world, and hid from all distant points by the umbrageous woods which cover the hills that inclose it, on a

* See Frontispiece.

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near approach all at once unveils its lovely prospect, with an enchantment apparently the effect of magic.

Yesterday afternoon, accompanied by a small party formed for my gratification, I walked a mile through the majestic woods of Craig faur, and, seated on this lofty steep, overshadowed by rich woods, at a neat cottage situated on the summit of a mountain called Mynydd-y Gaer, or the mountain of encampment (where are still to be seen the traces of a Roman encampment), we drank tea at a table set out on a pretty green, formed before the door of the cottage, bordered by trees of blooming myrtle, and beds of carnations; for in these romantic regions the myrtles are so common and luxuriant, that not only at Greenfield, but at Baglan Hall a bower is formed of myrtle now in full bloom, growing in as wild exuberance as the honeysuckle in England. Seated on this green bank, I

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beheld a wide extent of ocean before me, innumerable vessels gliding with their white sails on its surface; the distant bay and town of Swansea, with the more distant rocks of Oystermouth and the Devonshire coast, blending with the horizon. Such were the distant prospects: but to paint, as it merits, the one which encircled me is wholly impossible.

Can your ladyship imagine such an unparalleled view as woods so luxuriantly beautiful close on the sea coast, that while they proudly sweep along its shores, and bid defiance to its rude breezes, swell in such towering majesty as to appear almost co-equal with the heavens? I could not forbear attempting an imperfect sketch of this scene with my pencil to give a faint idea of it, though no pencil or pen can do it justice. In the vale below, embowered in deep foliage, Lord Vernon's elegant villa presents itself from a partial opening, which,

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when the tide is in, has the appearance of an island encompassed by a wide lake, on the glassy surface of which vessels are perpetually moving. Illumined as the whole was by an orient sky, there was an enchantment diffused around that rendered the *coup d'œil* pre-eminently beautiful.

My friends informed me this spot is so little known as to have rarely been visited by tourists; and when they dwell on the charms of Britton ferry, it is only the scenery viewed from Mrs. Clark's which forms the subject of their descriptions. The church-yard is in a situation wholly secluded from the town; possessing all that sacred quietude which ought to distinguish the sanctuaries of the dead. It is shaded and overhung by the pensile branches of tall lime trees. The graves are beautifully planted with the blue veronica, flowering lavender, sweet marjoram, southernwood, and rosemary.

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Mr. Mason has celebrated this church-yard in a fine elegy on the prevalent custom of strewing flowers on the graves, which is inserted in Mr. Malkin's Tour, and was given him most probably by the same gentleman to whom I am indebted for some of the following anecdotes. One peculiarity remains in some of the inscriptions in this church-yard which I have not found elsewhere; that of recording not only the years and months, but the days the deceased have lived. It was usual amongst the Romans, but has in general been dropped in modern times.

John, the son of Henry Williams, of Britton ferry parish, was page of the back stairs to Charles the First, and in great favour with him.

His grandson, the Rev. Matthew Henry, wrote an exposition of the Bible, in great estimation with those of the Calvinistic persuasion.

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Mr. Mason's elegy, like all his other poetical productions, is exceedingly beautiful. It is written in the style of Gray; and the following three or four stanzas will give your ladyship an idea of the simple and pensive charms that reign in this sequestered church-yard, as he describes them.

"From southern Cambria's richly varied clime,
Where grace and grandeur share an equal reign;
Where cliffs o'erhung with shade and hill sublime,
Of mountain lineage, sweep into the main.

"From bays where Commerce furls her wearied sails,
Proud to have dared the dangers of the deep,
And floats at anchored ease, inclosed by vales
To ocean's verge, where stray the vent'rous sheep.

"From brilliant scenes like these I turn my eye,
And lo! a solemn circle meets my view,
Walled to protect inhum'd mortality,
And shaded close with poplar and with yew.

"Deep in that dell the humble scene appears,
Where prayers, if humble, best to heaven aspire.

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No tower embattled, no proud spire it rears,
A moss grown corslet decks its lowly choir.

" And round that fane the sons of toil repose,
Who drove the ploughshare, or the sail who spread,
With wives, with children, all in measur'd rows,
Two whiten'd stones well mark the feet and head.

" While these between full many a simple flower,
Pansy and pink with languid beauty smile;
The primrose opening with the twilight hour,
And velvet tufts of fragrant camomile.

" Far more intent the smell than sight to please,
Surviving love selects its vernal race;
Plants that with early perfume feed the breeze,
May best each dank and noxious vapour chase."

The elegy goes on in the same plaintive and elegant strain through nineteen more stanzas.

The flowers are strewn, as he observes, in such rich variety over the dead, as literally to resemble a garden in such retired spots as Cadaxton, Brit-

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ton ferry, and Baglan, as to rival each other in beauty; neither are they destroyed by the profane touch of any rude hand.

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LETTER XXIII.

Greenfield, August 24.

THE situation of Greenfield is very pretty. The front windows command a view of the sea, and to the left rises the stupendous Aberavon mountain, to the craggy summits of which I was yesterday morning persuaded to ascend. The prospect is richly varied and extensive; that of the interior of the country presented the vale of Avon, and, enveloped in smoky furnaces, the town of Aberavon. Having got out of the proper tract, the descent was so frightfully perpendicular and slippery, we could only reach the bottom by walking without our shoes. The finest view is from

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Volvy-Nytha, the highest mountain in this part of Wales, and in a clear atmosphere unfolds the Devonshire coast as far as Hartland Point, the little isle of Lundy, and even the Bristol channel.

There is a pleasant ride from Britton ferry of four miles and a half over Crumplyn Burrows to Swansea.

The temperature of this lovely region is such, that I should almost imagine exotics would grow spontaneously here; amongst the rocks, some of which sparkle like gems, I gathered several beautiful species of fuci.

There are some beautiful magnolias and tulip trees in the gardens of Baglan house, and in the shrubbery are several fine arbutuses. I partook of a tart yesterday, made of a fruit called the *bog-berry, (vaccinium oxycoccos L.)* a species of the cranberry, butlarger, and of higher flavour. It is a small creeping plant, grow-

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ing so low on the ground, that in mowing the scythe passes over it. It is found in the neighbourhood of Llantrissent.

Mr. F—— observed to me, when I was admiring the abundance of apples in his orchard, that if the gentry and farmers were to encourage the growth of that useful fruit by cultivating orchards in this part of Wales, they could have apples as plentiful and of a sort as good as in Hereford, the soil is here so rich and genial. It is a pity the attempt is not made, for fruit in Wales is not only very scarce but extravagantly dear.

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LETTER XXIV.

Grenfield, August 24.

A FEW miles hence, towards the village of Margam, are the noble woods and park of that name; the property of Thomas Mansel Talbot, Esq. These woods are three miles in extent, and are peculiarly beautiful from their sloping position, hanging on an almost perpendicular hill. Indeed in no part of England have I ever beheld such luxuriant and towering woods as in this part of Wales, between Neath and Margam, including the surrounding ones of Britton ferry, which afford a very majestic and beautiful appearance to the parks of the Welsh nobility and gentry.

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Margam is well worth, not merely the traveller's, but the antiquary's inspection.

There are two monuments of great antiquity in this neighbourhood; one on the Margam mountain, with the following inscription:

BODAOC *hic* IVCIT ELAS CVTOTIS IRNI-
PRONEPOS ETERNAL VIDOMVV.

The other in Kenfig hamlet by the road-side leading to Kenfig and Newton, with this inscription:

PVMPEIVS CARANTOPIVS.

It has been said that this latter is the sepulchre of Prince Morgan, from whom the country took its name, who was slain eight hundred years before Christ's nativity; but it is well known by antiquaries that these characters and forms of letters are of much later

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date: that on the hill is near to entrenchments.

Through the kind interest of Mr. F—— I have obtained the following historical details.

"The modern name, Margam, seems to have originated from a prince of Glamorganshire, and other districts included under the name of *Siliria*. The name of the district was, in his time, changed from Gwent to *Gwlâd Fargan*, the county of *Morgan*, thence called Glamorganshire. What confirms this conjecture is, that the place is called in ancient writings, the village or abbey of *Morgan*, and sometimes, with a small variation, *Margan*. It was founded, according to the Welsh Chronicles, A. D. 1111, by Robert, Earl of Gloucester, natural son of Henry I. The monks were of the Cistertian order. It appears from historical accounts,

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as well as from the present remains, that it was once a stately and elegant structure. Giraldus Cambrensis, a learned ecclesiastic, who travelled through Wales with Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, to encourage the Welsh by his preaching to engage in the crusades, in an Itinerary that he published upon that occasion, terms it, *Nobili Cisterciensis ordinis Monasterium de Margan.*" He made this tour A. D. 1188.

" The abbey church is in the best style of Norman architecture. The floor of the abbey appears to have been composed of glazed brick, which the Normans generally used for that purpose, many of which are now to be seen among the ruins in the greenhouse. The annals of this abbey are published in Gale's *Scriptores Hist. Angl.* vol. i.

" Leland, in his *Collectanea*, seems

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to give this the preference to all the Welsh abbeys."

"Sir Rice Mansel, Knight, from whom the present owner of Margam, Thomas Mansel Talbot, Esq. is maternally descended, had a grant of this abbey and its territories in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of that king, at which time its revenues were valued at 180*l.* 7*s.* 4*d.* according to Dugdale. Before this time Sir Rice Mansel had resided at Oxwich in Gower; but upon this grant he built a handsome house, according to the architecture of those days, at Margam, which, after that, became the principal residence of the family. The old house contained a great number of apartments of every description, and, among the rest, an armory, in which were several pieces of ancient armour, to equip the chieftains and vassals. The monument of

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Sir Lewis Mansel, in particular, has been exceedingly well executed, and has a well written Latin epitaph inscribed upon it."

A remarkable epitaph in the monkish rhyming Latin was written by the celebrated Dr. Friend, physician, when he was on a visit at Margam, in the reign of Queen Anne, for a huntsman of Thomas Lord Mansel, which was engraven on a brass plate, and fixed in this church, but which has since been removed. To Mr. F—— I am indebted for the subjoined copy of the original.

EPITAPH ON THE MARGAM HUNTSMAN.

Vos qui colitis Hubertum,
Inter Divos nunc repertum,
Cornuque quod concedens satis
Reliquit vobis insonatis ;

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Latos solvite clamores,
In singultos et dolores:
Nam quis non tristi sonit ore
Conclamato venatore?
Aut ubi dolor justus, nisi
Ad tumulum Evani risi?
Hic per abrupta et per plana,
Nec tardo pede, nec spe vana.
Canibus et telis egit
Omne quod in silvis degit;
Hic evolavit mane puro,
Et cervis oeyor et euro,
Venaticis intentus rebus,
Tunc cum medius ardit Phœbus;
Indefessus adhuc quando
Idem occidit venando.
At vos venatum illo duce
Alia non surgetis luce.
Nam mors mortalium venator
Qui ferina nunquam satur
Cursum prevertit humanum
Proh dolor! rapuit Evanum!
Nec meridies nec Aurora
Vobis reddent ejus ora:
Restat illi nobis flenda,
Nox perpetua dormienda.

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Finivit multa laude motum
In ejus vita longe notum.
Reliquit æquos, cornu, canes,
Tandem quiescant ejus manes.
Evani risi. Thomas Mansel,

Servo fideli, Dominus benevolus, P. Ob. 1702.

Thomas Lord Mansel placed this epitaph to the memory of his faithful servant.

The following is a literal English translation.

All you who bow at Hubert's* shrine,
(Hubert, enroll'd with saints divine),
And wind the sportive horn which he
Bequeath'd you, a last legacy!
Oh, cease your joy-inspiring tones,
And suit your notes to sighs and moans!
Who would not join to mourn the fall
Of dead, dead huntsman, past recal?
Where can we juster grief bestow,
Than o'er poor Evan here laid low?

*The God of Huntsmen.

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O'er craggy hill and spacious plain,
His pace ne'er slow, his hope ne'er vain,
With dogs and weapons he pursued
The whole of all the sylvan brood;
At peep of day, right out he flew,
Nor stags nor winds his swiftness knew;
Intent on sport 'twas "Hark away!"
When Phœbus shot his fiercest ray.
Nor harbour'd he one thought of rest
When wearied Phœbus sought the west.
But ah! no future morn shall he
To joyous chace your leader be:
For death, fell hunter of our race!
And never sated with the chace,
And turn'd and seiz'd his prey.
Ah me! poor Evan snatch'd away.
Nor morn nor noon shall ever more
To you his cheerful face restore;
He hath an endless night to sleep;
We sad survivors long shall weep.
Fam'd all his life the country round,
This his last scene with glory crown'd.
Horses and dogs, and horn resign'd;
Oh! may his ghost a requiem find!

The ruins at Margam are worthy the strictest attention, as they con-

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tain many fine specimens of architecture, and several ancient gravestones and inscriptions. The remains of the chapter-house are in particular admired by all persons of knowledge and taste on the subject. The author of the Pursuits of Architectural Innovation, says, "If ever truth in architectural design, proportion, or symmetry of parts were made evident, where not any thing is too profusely charged, or too simply set forth, here stands, assuredly, a model of all that is desirable in the noble science."

The church is now pulled down, and a new one is building by the present proprietor, T. M. Talbot, Esq. In a spot where nature has been so profuse, it is to be lamented there is no family mansion at Margam. Mr. Talbot's residence is at Penrice castle in Gower, and there he is modernizing

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on the site of the ancient ruins. Even the old mansion has been pulled down some years, and an elegant green-house in its place has been built of free stone from the Margam estate. It contains the finest orangery in the kingdom; the original trees of which are said to have been intended as a present from a prince of Portugal to Queen Elizabeth, but the vessel losing her course was wrecked on this coast. Either from the manner of their being treated, or the perfectly sheltered situation they are in, the trees arrive to a larger size than any other in the kingdom, and mature their fruit without any artificial heat. Some trees which Mr. Talbot has planted in the natural ground with removable frames about them, and assisted with stove-heat in winter, produce fruit of as large a size, and in greater perfection than any eaten in England from

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abroad, being perfectly ripe when gathered.

At each end of the green-house is a room containing models of buildings, marbles, busts, &c. There is a fine one of Pallas in Parian marble, and a model of the Coloseum in pumice-stone. The figures are now much mutilated.

All the lovely scenery of this enchanting spot I am now about to take my leave of, and I do it with regret; being persuaded, that as I proceed every new object must be seen to disadvantage.

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LETTER XXV.

Chepstow, Aug. 29.

On leaving Baglan the first place I passed through was the little town of Aberavon, situated in a barren soil and dreary country, surrounded by smoke and iron works. It derives its name from the river Avon, over which is thrown a bridge of one arch, built by Edwards, a common mason, who built also the celebrated one of Pont-y-Prieth, said to resemble, in the beauty of its construction, the Rialto at Venice. Proceeding through Margam we changed horses at Pile inn, a noble house, kept by Mr. Marment and where travellers meet with excellent accommodation. Should they

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choose to remain for a time, board and lodging are very moderate. Newton house, likewise, at four miles distance on the coast, belonging to Mr. Marment, is kept on the same plan for the benefit of those persons who wish for sea-bathing. At Newton is an ebbing and flowing well, which fills when the tide is out, and is nearly empty on the flood.

In the neighbourhood of Pile are Slyr rocks and Kynfig pool, a large piece of water. The sea samphire (*critchum maritimum*) the species noticed by Shakespeare, grows about Newton. I passed Ewenny abbey between Pile and Cowbridge, belonging to the ancient family of the Turberville's descended from Sir Pain de Turberville, who came over to England with William the Conqueror, and was one of the twelve followers of Robert Fitz-haimon. The county of

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Glamorgan was divided between Robert Fitz-haimon and his followers. Ewenny is a fine ruin*.

The ruin of Ogmore castle was pointed out to me; it is of as long standing as the reign of William Rufus, and was bestowed by Fitz-haimon on William de Lundres one of his knights. These knights "he called *peers*, each had his respective post in Cardiff

* It is thus described by Camden.

"Wenny, or Ewenny, a benedictine priory, was founded by Sir John Lundres, Lord of Ogmore, about 1140, valued at 87*l.* per annum, and once strongly fortified. The church venerable and ancient, the columns round and massive, the capitals simple, and the arches round. In the chancel, whose roof is stone, with groined arches, is a monument ascribed to Pain Turberville, conqueror of Glamorganshire, whose family long inhabited the mansion-house, which is ancient, and has another large hall. Here is another monument for Morice de Lundres. Two gateways and part of the wall remain."

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castle, and to attend at his court for the administration of justice when summoned." These knights were, William de Lundres, Richard Granville, Paine Turbervill, Oliver St. John, Robert de St. Quintin, Roger Bekernel, William Easterling, William Humfranvill, Richard Siward, John Flemming, Peter Soore, Reginald Sully.

The river Remney divides this county from Monmouthshire. *Remnie* signifies to divide. On this river (but the exact spot is unknown), "Faustus," according to Camden, "the good son of the worthless Vortigern, built a great place, where, with other holy men, he spent his time in prayer to God, that his father might be brought to a serious repentance, and that his country might be delivered from the Saxon war."

Cowbridge is a market town, con-

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sisting of a single street; and one of the three that Fitz-haimon reserved for himself after his conquest.

Cardiff derives considerable beauty in point of situation from the grandeur of the Bristol channel, with several islands emerging from it; and the shores of Somersetshire rising beyond in perspective. The Taff is a fine river, and takes a pretty winding course into the channel. The bridge, consisting of five arches, is remarkably handsome. The ruinous part of the castle stands on a gentle mound, surrounded by extensive ramparts, richly festooned with ivy, and there is a broad terrace round them which affords an agreeable walk. A handsome Gothic mansion is built on part of the site of the castle, belonging to the Windsor family. The mixture of the modern and Gothic is by no means happy, and

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takes from the interest Cardiff castle would otherwise excite. It was here that Robert, Duke of Normandy (according to tradition), was confined a prisoner by his brother, William Rufus, for twenty-six years, and died, not merely in captivity, but by his orders had his eyes burnt out in the most cruel manner.

Cardiff is a handsome, well built town*. In no part of Wales are the inhabitants more given to superstition than in Cardiff, where, on many occasions, it is carried to the most absurd extremes. A physician of Swansea was called in to visit a patient at Cardiff, the nature of whose disorder rendered it impossible he could live

* The famous Arthur, son of Meirik, king of Glamorgan, was a native of Cardiff.—*Swansea Guide.*

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many hours. When questioned as to his case, which he confessed to be hopeless, it was observed, not merely by the sick man's household, but also by his own daughter (a well educated young lady), that "They knew he could not live before the doctor came, for, against all their advice, Mr. —— had built a *pigeon-house* within the last twelvemonths, and no person had ever been known to survive the year who had presumed, in spite of every warning, to do so."

So firmly rooted is this persuasion, that no argument could remove it; and it is a well known fact, that when a new dove-cot is built the belief of the country is that the owner will not survive the year.

The stage from Cardiff to Newport was quite a novel scene, from the perpetual grand object of the Bristol channel covered with shipping, and

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which, in the aspect I saw it from, reminded me of the Frith of Forth and the Pentland hills; only here, to a noble water view, was added all the luxuriantly wooded hills of Monmouthshire with its sylvan valleys.

Newport is a long, ugly town, and does not contain a dozen good-looking houses. It is supposed to have risen out of the ruins of the once superb city of Carleon. Its castle, a strong fortress, stands on the banks of the river Usk; part of it is converted into a farm house. It appears to advantage when seen from the bridge, built by the same man who designed that at Pont-y-Prieth and Aberavon. It is superior to the very handsome one at Cardiff, and can seldom be rivalled in the beauty of its construction.

There is a harbour at Newport for shipping. The sea star-wort (*aster*

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tripoleum) grows on the muddy shores at Newport. The church-yard, seated on an eminence, commands a rich and extensive view of the vale of Glamorganshire, considered the garden of South Wales.

The stage from Newport to Chepstow is one perpetual ascent and descent, but on a second view of Monmouthshire, I find it, what I ever thought, pre-eminently beautiful. Between Newport and Chepstow I passed, in the night, the ancient city of Carleon, now an obscure village.

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LETTER XXVI.

Chepstow, Aug. 30.

Two years since I left this place full of disappointment and regret from the impossibility of being accommodated, and a strange fatality seemed to attend a second effort, which I should not have had courage to make without obtaining an introduction to a family resident here; for, from the constant resort of company, I was aware of the difficulty of accommodation. Every place was full; and after being denied admittance, had the mortification to learn that —— were gone to Tenby. Reluctant to again have only a transient view

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of scenery I knew to be so lovely, I enquired whether there were any lodgings to be had, and, with some perseverance, have, at length, found a quiet abode, where I shall remain for a few days, that I may see Tintern Abbey and Piercefield. The inhabitants of Chepstow, aware of its surrounding beauties, take every advantage of imposing upon strangers by their exorbitant demands. Of the town, the castle, and the bridge, in point of romantic situation, I think as highly as formerly, when viewed only in a transient manner: the scenery on the Wye hence to Tintern is magnificent. The rocks rise to the immense height of six hundred feet in some parts; often they are wholly naked, and at others beautifully covered with woods from the water's verge to their summits.

Perhaps there is no ruin in Britain

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equal to that of Tintern Abbey for the elegance of its architectural remains, or for the romantic beauty of its situation. This venerable pile is entirely hid from the eye until a close approach, from being embosomed by high and apparently inaccessible hills clothed with rich and umbrageous woods, which seem as if placed there for a tower of defence against every bold intruder. All description can give your ladyship but an imperfect idea of this beautiful fabric when the portal is thrown open, and it appears in all its ancient majesty.

"——————These lone walls
And storied arches have a character,
Marking the virtues of the time deceas'd,
Whilst Echo from her hollow vaults
Speaks in the listening ear of *Contemplation*
The epilogue to life's *mortality*."

The number of arches overhung with ivy, which gracefully support

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the building, rising one above an other, are terminated at the end by a prodigious Gothic window, also interwoven with ivy, but which admits sufficient light to serve as a beautiful vista to the mountains appearing through it. To the left a double row of arcades, clustered in triplets magnificently festooned with the exuberant ivy, spread along the aisle, extending over the ruined divisions of every window, and clustering even to the top, form a *coup d'œil*, which astonishes the spectator.

Had such a piece of architecture been created by the most curious and ingenious hand of taste, not even the happiest invention could have raised such a fabric as it *now* appears; for to compare it to any thing I have ever seen is impossible: it is *unique*, and unrivalled in nature's most exquisite design for venerable grandeur.

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To gratify myself I attempted a sketch of it from the borders of the river; but so many and various ones have been taken, I have omitted its insertion in this work.

The length of the nave of Tintern Abbey is two hundred and thirty feet, and the breadth thirty-three; the cross aisle is one hundred and sixty feet long. It was founded in the year 1131 for Cistertian monks by Walter Claire. It was dedicated to the Virgin Mary. According to Pennant's Tour into Scotland, this abbey was built only two years before the magnificent structure of Melrose was, founded likewise for Cistertian monks by David the First, and also dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

The castle of Chepstow is thought to have been built by some of the earls of Pembroke, but Camden, who describes it, says, " *It is very fair,*

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standing on the brink of the river;" and is of opinion, it "bears no great marks of antiquity." Henry Martin, the regicide, died a prisoner in it.

The parish church is part of the remains of the old priory, and retains some Saxon architecture. The tide at Chepstow rises upwards of sixty-three feet perpendicular, which is higher than in any other part of Europe. One half the bridge is singularly constructed of wooden boards, which fastened with pegs on each side, rises and falls, making a most tremendous noise in going over.

Piercefield, which combines with all the beauties of nature the most tasteful embellishments of art to render its scenery enchanting, was formerly the property of Valentine Morris, Esq., a gentleman whose character lives in the hearts of the old inha-

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bitants of Chepstow with respectful love and veneration.

He was a man of so philanthropic a mind as to unite with every social virtue a benevolence and charity the most unbounded; his table was spread with munificence, whilst his purse was ever open to the wants of the poor, who were either supported by easy labour, or assisted by the bounty of his hand if disabled by sickness or age.

Unfortunate in a contested election, he accepted an appointment as governor of St. Vincent's, and quitted Piercefield followed by hundreds of mourners. The rich lost a pleasant companion—a valuable friend—but the poor were deprived of their generous, their noble benefactor, and they thronged round his gates in multitudes, with weeping and bitter la-

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mentation, accompanying him in all the anguish of grief for miles out of the town, whilst, to publicly express their sorrow, the church bells were muffled, and a mournful peal testified a loss they knew to be irreparable!

"Ah, that the friendly e'er should want a friend!"

Mr. Valentine Morris expended the remainder of his fortune "in advancing the cultivation of the colony, and raising works of defence (says an author, speaking of him), when the island fell into the hands of the French." Government failed to reimburse him; he returned unrequited, disappointed, poor, and broken-hearted. His home was the *King's Bench!* And he, alas! who had been the soother of the afflicted, the cherisher of the distressed, died, without the

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cheering consolation of a single friend to close his eyes! His lady, whose mind was unequal to such extreme calamity, sunk under it, and became deranged!

Well may we say, "The ways of heaven are dark and intricate!" They are beyond our ken: but *he* who afflicts, surely knows what is best for us!

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LETTER XXVII.

Gloucester, Sept. 1, 1808.

FROM Chepstow I proceeded direct to Gloucester, passing, in the way, through Cheltenham, which is situated in the vale, and celebrated for the resort of company to drink the waters. It consists of one street, a mile in length, and of late is greatly improved by the number of new buildings converted into fashionable lodging-houses, all of which are filled during the season.

The entrance to Gloucester, over an old bridge in bad repair, is disgraceful to so noble a city, for its

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streets are spacious and handsome, and there are some good public buildings; but the general appearance of Gloucester is dull. According to history it is very ancient*.

* It continued in the possession of the Romans till their own empire occasioned them to quit the island. Its government then reverted to the British princes, under whose domination it continued till about the year 577, when, according to the Saxon Chronicle, it was surrendered to the West Saxons, and was reputed as one of their "principal cities: it was afterwards subjugated by the Mercians, who also obtained possession of other parts of the country. Under the Saxons its appellation was once more changed, and became *Gleaucestre*, the undoubted etymon of its present name.

"During the continuance of this city under the recovered sway of its native princes, it gave title to an earl, the gallant Eldol, who is recorded to have accompanied Vortigern to the fatal banquet at Ambersbury, in Wiltshire, where so many British chieftains fell a sacrifice to Saxon treachery. The Britons were unarmed, and Eldol is said to

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The cathedral is a grand and venerable structure, combining the Sax-

have 'caught up a stake, and to have laid about him with such effect that he slew no less than seventy of his opponents; and having broken the heads, arms, and limbs of many more, got from them into Gloucester, his own city.' Hengist, the Saxon chief, was afterwards defeated (A. D. 489) at Mase-hill, in Yorkshire, by Aurelius Ambrosius, assisted by Eldol, and other noble Britons. The accounts of the battle vary; according to some, Hengist was slain by Eldol in the midst of the Pagan army; but Dr. Hutton relates that he was made prisoner, and conveyed to this city, where Aurelius, and his nobility, assembled to determine his fate; and that, after some argument, he was put to death without the walls, as a consequence of his former baseness.

"The neighbourhood of Gloucester was frequently the scene of action between the Britons and Saxons, the strength and consequence of this city rendering it an object of frequent enterprise. By these conflicts its buildings were nearly ruined; and the whole place might have sunk into complete decay, if Wolphere, son of King Renda, had not enlarged and adorned it about the year

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on, the Norman, and Gothic architecture; but the general plan of all

679. This restoration was so perfect, that Bede informs us it was esteemed, about the commencement of the eighth century, 'as one of the noblest cities in the kingdom.'

"The early importance of this city is evinced by its having been the residence of various Saxon monarchs: and hence it was denominated a royal city; as it is expressly termed in a grant made by King Edgar to the monks of Worcester, dated at Gloucester, in the year 964. By this monarch a battle was fought here with the Danes, who had twice plundered the city in the times of his predecessors, and who again ravaged, and partly consumed it by fire, during the reign of his son Etheldred.

"After the decisive battle between Canute and Ironside, the latter retreated into this city: and here, also, Edward the Confessor frequently resided, and kept his court. William the Conqueror followed the example of the Saxon sovereigns, and often made Gloucester the place of his residence; and in this city he generally spent his Christmas in great splendour, attended by the principal nobility, and ecclesiastics of his king-

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cathedrals are so much alike, that I shall not describe the present one to dom. This custom was continued by William Rufus, after whose accession, in the year 1087, part of the city was burnt by the adherents of his brother Robert. In 1093, Malcolm the Third, King of Scotland, was received here by Rufus with great haughtiness, on the occasion of the adjustment of the terms of a treaty of peace.

"Henry the First held his court at Gloucester in 1123; and the same year summoned all his bishops, abbots, and thanes, to attend it, for the purpose of choosing an archbishop of Canterbury. Another great council was held here by Henry the Second in the year 1175, to determine on the most effectual measures for quelling the insurrections of the Welch. On the death of King John, in 1216, the young prince, his son, afterwards Henry the Third, was crowned in the abbey church by the Bishop of Winchester and Bath, in the presence of Walo, the pope's legate, and the principal nobility and gentry in the kingdom. The ceremony was performed on the day succeeding the eve of St. Simon and St. Jude; the prince previously swearing before the high altar 'to reverence God and the Church, to administer justice, observe good laws and

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your ladyship, further than to notice the most conspicuous of the monuments.

King Edward the Second, who was murdered in Berkeley castle, A. D. 1327, is enshrined in a beautiful alabaster tomb, with a recumbent figure of the deceased monarch, robed and crowned. The devices on the monument are appropriate and elegant. The sculptor is supposed to have been an Italian. There is a carved image in oak of Robert, Duke of Normandy, who died in Cardiff castle. The expression of the countenance is well preserved.

customs, and pay a tribute of one thousand marks, annually, to the pope.' This sovereign frequently resided, and held his court and council at Gloucester, which, Fuller observes, had more of his favour than even London itself, because 'it was strong and loyal.'"—*History of Gloucester, in Beauties of England and Wales*, vol. v.

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The cloisters, completed by abbot Froucester, are richly carved, and thought the most beautiful in England.

The gaol, through which I was shewn by the Rev. ——, besides being a magnificent building, is conducted on so noble a plan of reform, as does honour to the institutor, as well as to humanity. There you behold a race of unhappy criminals brought often, we will hope, to a proper sense of their former wickedness; for, while they have pious admonition and gentle treatment, their time is usefully employed; their diet wholesome; the air they breathe good; and their apartments (for cells they cannot be called) so clean and comfortable, as to remedy the former existing evil of dire disease and infection; and, above all, the vicious company of each other.

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The debtors are allowed the privilege of being together, and even of partaking a meal with any friend who desires to visit them, being divided from them only by a slight partition, and having the freedom of seeing and conversing with them. Those prisoners who choose to work at whatever trade they have been brought up to are allowed to do so, and their goods are exposed to sale in a shop adjoining the gaol for their emolument.

The termination to these *Excursions* is now arrived. Yet, ere I take my final leave, I would, madam, repeat my lively sense of the honour you have conferred upon me in permitting me publicly to declare, under the sanction of your noble and respected name, which, high as it is, can add no additional lustre to

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your virtues, with what perfect respect and veneration for those virtues, I remain, madam,

Your ladyship's
most obliged
and devoted humble servant,
E. I. SPENCE.

THE END.

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T. DAVISON, Whitefriars, London.

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